

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
PREDESTINATION
unto LIFE,

Explained and Vindicated :

In *Four* SERMONS, preach'd to the Church of
CHRIST, meeting in *Brattle-Street*, and publish'd
at their general Desire : With some additional
Passages and Quotations.

By *WILLIAM COOPER*,
One of the PASTORS of said *Church.*

With a PREFACE by the *Senior Pastors* of the
Town.

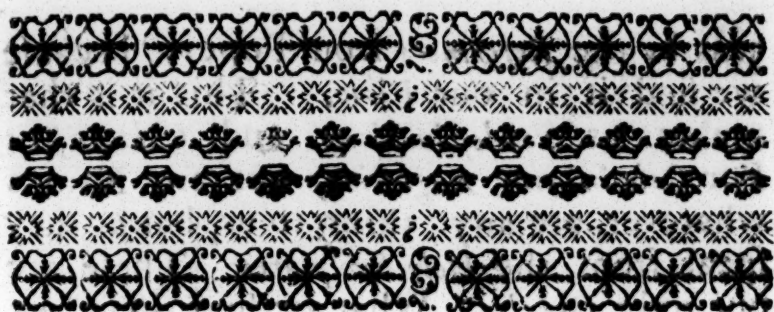
Doctrinam autem hanc de prædestinatione Dei
æterna atque immutabili, esse neque suppri-
mendam omnino, neque in scholis tantum
inter doctos explicandam, sed etiam in Pulpi-
tis ad populum prædicandam ; sed sobrie, hoc
est, juxta ea tantum, quæ de hac in scripturis
revelata sunt ; et prudenter, hoc est, sermone
ita attemperato, ut neque ad licentiam, neque
ad desperationem adducat, sed ad ædificatio-
nem faciat, dico, atque doceo. *Zanch.*

B O S T O N :

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1. To the President of the United States



TO THE
READER.

THE Subject of the following
Treatise is one of the Doctrines
of the *Reformation*, embrac'd
and own'd by the *Protestant*
Churches, when they threw off
the Yoke, and renounc'd the Errors of
Popery; and is particularly the Doctrine,
not only of the Church of *Scotland*, but of
England and *Ireland*, as they are by Law
established. Yet it is embrac'd by us, as it

was by the *Reformers* from Popery, because we find it in our *Bible*. This it is that makes us *Predestinarians* and *Calvinists* : For *Calvin* nor *Augustine*, nor any Names whatever, are any thing to us, but as they speak from the *Holy Scriptures*. These are our only *Oracles*. What we find there, we believe and profess, tho' incomprehensible to our weak and shallow Minds, which are by no means the Measure of Truth. And we think we act a perfectly rational Part, as well as reverent before the HIGH GOD, the Infinite *Intelligence*, in bowing our Understandings to his Revelations respecting Truth and Duty, even where we cannot answer every *Scruple* or *Objection*, for the reconciling *seeming Oppositions*.

Let none then entertain the Doctrine of *Election* with *Aversion*, Scoff and Ridicule ; but with the lowest *Reverence* and highest *Adoration*. You will see with what *Reason* from the plain and *sincere word* of God, thro' the following *Discourses* ; which are, in our Judgment, as modest, strong and brief an Explanation and Vindication of this important Truth, as the *Reader* will be like to meet with ; and well suited to convince *Gainfayers*, satisfy the *doubting*, establish the *wavering*, and stop the Mouth of

of *vain Talkers*, in Contradiction to the *faithful Word*, which we are commanded to *hold fast* and *contend* for.

We willingly take this Opportunity to testify our Concurrence with the *Author* in the Verity and Importance of this *Doctrine*; and our Satisfaction in his having preach'd and publish'd these Discourses.

And it is our hearty Prayer to God that the Churches of the Reformation, and *our* Churches in particular, may be confirm'd and established in this and other *Doctrines of Grace*, as they have been of old deliver'd to 'em and received by 'em: And that as it is their indisputable *Right* and Duty in their choice of *Pastors*, to take heed to the Soundness of their *Principles*, as well as to their godly *Life* and edifying *Gifts*, they may ever do so in Fidelity to *God*, and Care of their own *Souls*, and those of their Families.

That these *Discourses* may be attended with a Divine Blessing for these Ends, and that our dear *Brother* may long live a Blessing to the *Flock* over which the HOLY GHOST

(4)

GHOST has made him an Overseer, to feed them in the Strength of the LORD GOD, and be continued a *burning Light* before all the Churches ; and after a Life of great *Services* receive the *Rewards* of the *wise and faithful* Servant at the Coming of our LORD, are the Prayers of his *Brethren* and *Fellow-Servants* with him to these Churches of CHRIST.

Benjamin Colman,

Joseph Sewall,

Boston, April 15.

1740.

Thomas Prince,

Andrew LeMercier,

John Webb.

N. B. Among the CORRECTIONS at the end, these following should have been mention'd; Page 35. l. 7. from the bottom, read, *The elder shall serve the younger.* p. 77. l. 14. for *two* r. *too*.

OF

Predestination unto Life.

S E R M O N I.

R O M A N S, VIII. 29, 30.

For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.



H E apostle having in the foregoing chapters of this epistle, explain'd the doctrine of justification, and press'd the necessity of sanctification, applies himself in this to the consolation of the Lord's people. For the holy
B scriptures

scriptures are not only profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, but are written that we, thro' patience and comfort of them, might have hope : And the ministers of the word are appointed to be helpers of the joy of them who thro' grace have believed. And, as a worthy Expositor † says of this chapter, many of the people of God have found it a well-spring of comfort to their souls, living and dying, and have suck'd and been satisfied from these breasts of consolation, and with joy drawn water out of these wells of salvation.

Having reckon'd up many particular instances of the happiness of true christians, such as a freedom from guilt and condemnation, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a relation to God as his children, a title to future glory, and the concurrence of all providences to promote their spiritual and everlasting good, he represents the ground of all these as laid in God's eternal decree of Election, or Predestination unto life, in the words that I have read. *For whom he did fore-know, them he also did predestinate, &c.* Here the order of the causes of our salvation is plainly set before us. These words have been commonly call'd the golden chain of

† Mr. Henry.

salvation; and such a chain it is as cannot be broken. There are four links in it.

1. *Whom he did fore-know, he also did pre-destinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.* Whom he did *fore-know*. This is the foundation upon which the whole frame of the surprising work of man's redemption stands; the first thing to be consider'd in the scheme of salvation, upon which all the other parts follow, and with which they are inseparably connected. It is here said of a number of the children of men, as distinguish'd from the rest, that God has fore-known them. And this fore-knowledge implies choice; his having pitch'd upon them to be the objects on whom his redeeming grace shall be glorified. It is the same with that *everlasting love*, wherewith he is said to have loved his people, Jer. 31. 3. And means nothing less than his having *set them apart for himself*, Psal. 4. 3. Words of knowledge in scripture often signify affection and choice. So God said to *Moses*, Exod. 33. 17. *Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.* Where one expression explains the other. So the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 8. 3. *That if any man love God, the same is known of him.* A knowledge of favour and good-will must needs be here intended; and this previous and preparatory to any thing recommending and lovely in

the objects of it ; as is plain from the manner in which the apostle speaks to the Galatians, ch. 4. v. 9. *Ye have known God, or rather are known of God.* On the other hand, we are told || our Saviour will say to some in the great day, *I never knew you, i. e. I never approv'd and own'd you ; for both their persons and characters were well known to him.*† The same word is rendred fore-ordained, in 1 Pet. 1. 20. *Who, (i. e. Christ) was verily fore ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* God's fore-knowing his people means nothing less than his eternal purpose to make them his friends and favourites. It must signifie his deter-

|| Mat. 7. 23.

† Duplex Dei decretum versatur circa electos, quorum alterum appellat Apostolus *ἐγνώσθαι*, alterum *προορισμὸν*, predestinationem, sive electionem. Illa autem *ἐγνώσθαι*, sive prænotio, non est nuda et simplicis notitiæ, sed approbationis, juxta usitatissimam scripturæ phrasilogiam. Si quis diligit Deum, hic cognitus est ab eo. Ecquid cognitione nuda, seclusa approbatione Dei ? At sic cognoscuntur etiam osiores Dei. Twiss. Vind. Grat. Lib. 3. Pag. 259.

Etiam a Piscatore observatum *ἐγνώσθαι* et *ἐκδοτικόν* pro eodem adhiberi.

minig

mining to do them good, to call, justifie, and sanctifie them now, and glorifie them hereafter.

Those whom God thus fore-knew, he did *predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son*; to be like to Jesus Christ in the temper of their minds, and actions of their lives. This takes in the whole work of sanctification, of which Christ is the great pattern and samplar. Observe; It is not said God fore-knew they *would* be conform'd to the image of his son, and so predestinated them, as some turn the sence of the words. This cannot be the meaning of them; for this conformity to Christ is said to be the thing they are predestinated to, and is made the result of this fore-knowledge; the effect of it, and not the cause. *Whom he did fore-know, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son.* Being design'd for glory and happiness as the end, they are decreed to grace and holiness as the way. For if there is a difference between fore-knowledge and predestination, it seems to be this, the former is the appointment of the end, the other of the means unto it. And they are predestinated to this conformity to the image of the son of God, for the honour of Christ, whose glory is design'd by the Father in the whole work of redemption. *That he might be*

be the first born among many brethren ; might have the honour of being the great pattern of holiness, as well as the meritorious cause of our salvation, and so in all things might have the preheminance.

2. Whom he did predestinate, them he also *called*. Not only with the external call ; so many are called, that were not chosen † ; but with the internal and effectual call ; which is the work of the Spirit of God, whereby he convinces the conscience of guilt and wrath, enlightens the understanding in the knowledge of Christ ; bows the will, and inclines the heart, to embrace him as a saviour, and obey him as a king and lord. 'Tis, says one, an effectual call from self and earth, to God, and Christ, and heaven, as the end ; from sin and vanity, to grace and holiness, and seriousness, as the way." This is the first open work of grace upon an elect person. And all whom God has from eternity predestinated to grace and glory, he does in his own way and time, thus effectually call.

3. Whom he called, them he also *justified*. Being in their effectual calling perswaded and enabled to embrace the Lord Jesus

† *Matt. 12. 16.*

Christ as he is offered in the gospel, they are thro' him absolved from guilt, and accepted as righteous; are no longer look'd upon and dealt with as criminals, but own'd and lov'd as friends and favourites.

4. Whom he justified, them he also glorified. The other privileges the elect of God are made partakers of in time, this of glorification, when time shall be with them no more; in the soul first at death, in soul and body united after the resurrection, through a blessed never-ending eternity. To this they were design'd in their election; for this they are prepared by their effectual calling, and the sanctification of the spirit; that which hindreth is taken out of the way in their justification; and now, what can come between such a soul and glory? *As for God his work is perfect* †; and in the glorification of all the elect, his design of love to them will have its full accomplishment.

It is not my intention to speak of all these privileges in the order in which they stand connected in our text; and I have but lately discours'd concerning two of them, *effectual calling* and *justification*. My present purpose therefore is, to treat only

† Psal. 18. 30.

of that which is the ground of them all, and from which the rest result, namely, *Election*, or *Predestination unto life*.

This is an illustrious and very precious doctrine of christianity ; so plainly reveal'd in the holy scriptures, that 'tis really strange that any who profess to regulate their faith by the *bible* can deny it. Yet 'tis not only deny'd by many, but decried and reproach'd as unworthy of God, and prejudicial to religion ; while others who don't care to deny it, yet speak of it as amongst those mysterious, controversial, and speculative points, which it is best not to meddle with ; and so they would have it smother'd in the church, and shut out of our sermons.

True indeed this doctrine has its mysteries, and abstruse difficulties, when our minds try to enter far into it ; so has other doctrines of the gospel which yet we must *affirm constantly*, and endeavour to explain. Nor is it a doctrine purely speculative ; no, it has a powerful influence upon vital religion, and practical godliness — It has a direct tendency to advance the glory of God's grace in our salvation, to humble the pride of man, to engage the love, excite the praises, and constrain the obedience of God's children.

Our

Our saviour preach'd this doctrine ; so did his apostles after him ; and the epistles to the churches are full of it ; which plainly shews God would not have it lock'd up from his people. Should we therefore, who now preach the gospel to you, pass it over in silence, we should not be able to say we have declar'd to you *the whole counsel of God*. I humbly apprehend such an omission would be in effect to say, that Christ and his apostles preach'd, and the scriptures reveal a doctrine, which is found to be useless if not hurtful, and therefore may not now be insisted on. And would not this be to reproach the Holy Spirit who has indited the scriptures, and to do an unspeakable injury to revelation it self ?

Besides, we are verily perswaded the edification and consolation of the people of God, are not a little concern'd in the opening and applying of this truth ; and that many other doctrines of the gospel cannot be rightly understood without it ---- I have therefore chosen this for my subject, out of the chapter that has been read in course this afternoon ; sensible, I hope, that 'tis an awful and tremendous subject ; and with an humble dependence on the Holy Spirit so to enlighten and assist me, as that the truth may not suffer, nor any soul be hurt, thro' an unskilful management.

C

Indeed,

Indeed, let the subject be managed never so cautiously & scripturally, it can hardly be expected but it will be treated as the discourses of the apostle himself were, of whom we read, Acts 19. 8, 9. *That when he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and perswading the things concerning the kingdom of God, divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude.* But duty is ours, and the event God's. We must always leave the success of our preaching with him; and we are assured his word will not return void, but will accomplish the thing whereunto it is sent † If any should be enrag'd and hardn'd by the things that are spoken, and wrest them to their own destruction, (which God forbid!) some, I trust, may be confirm'd, edified, and comforted. Yea, possibly these discourses on election, may be bless'd for the conversion of some of the elect of God, who may be awakned hereby to give diligence to make their calling and election sure: And if so, free-grace will have the glory.

Tho' I shall study as much brevity as is consistent with clearness, yet I can't prosecute my design within the compass of a

† Isa, 55. 11.

single sermon ; three or four discourses, if God give us the opportunity for them, will be little eno' for my purpose. And now, my Hearers, let me crave, and, as I speak in the name of Christ, I may demand your reverend and serious attention. Let me entreat you to lay aside prejudices, if you have entertain'd any, against this doctrine, and to *receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls.* Let me desire you to stop all censures till I have finish'd the subject, if, thro' the good hand of our God upon us, I may be allowed to do so. And let me further ask you, before I proceed, to lift up your heart to God, in some such secret petition as this, "Lord ! de- If this doctrine be according to thy mind and will, suffer not my mind to be prejudiced against it ; but help me to receive it in the love of it, and to improve it to all those holy saving purposes for which thou hast reveal'd it in thy word !" If any will not do thus, let me tell them, their minds are not rightly dispos'd to hear, nor can they be look'd upon to be sincere enquirers after truth.

And now the method in which, thro' the assistance, I would pursue the subject is this,

Indeed, let the subject be managed never so cautiously & scripturally, it can hardly be expected but it will be treated as the discourses of the apostle himself were, of whom we read, Acts 19. 8, 9. That when he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God, divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude. But duty is ours, and the event God's. We must always leave the success of our preaching with him; and we are assured his word will not return void, but will accomplish the thing whereunto it is sent † If any should be enrag'd and hardn'd by the things that are spoken, and wrest them to their own destruction, (which God forbid!) some, I trust, may be confirm'd, edified, and comforted. Yea, possibly these discourses on election, may be bless'd for the conversion of some of the elect of God, who may be awakned hereby to give diligence to make their calling and election sure: And if so, free-grace will have the glory.

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And now the method in which, thro' divine assistance, I would pursue the subject is this,

I.

I. I would represent and state the truth, to shew you what we intend by the doctrine of Election, or Predestination unto life.

II. I will endeavour to prove it, and shew that the doctrine so represented and stated, is really the doctrine of the gospel.

III. I shall attempt to answer the objections commonly bro't against it, and to clear the doctrine of some difficulties wherewith its enemies have loaded it.

IV. I shall expose a few of the absurdities which follow upon the denial of this doctrine, and mention some difficulties of which the contrary scheme labours, and with which they are embarrass'd who are on the other side of the question.

V. I shall open the importance of the doctrine, and shew of what consequence it is in the christian scheme.

Lastly, I shall endeavour to improve to the great ends of serious religion, and practical godliness.

I. I am in the first place, to represent and state the truth, and shew what we intend by the doctrine of Election, or Predestination

destination unto life. And I chuse to describe it to you in the terms of the 17th among the famous articles of the church of *England*, which are subscrib'd by all the allow'd clergy of the nation. "Predestination unto life, says that article, is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby before the foundation of the world was laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and condemnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ Jesus out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ unto everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour." With this article agree the confession of faith set forth by the assembly of Divines at *Westminster*, and also their *Catechisms*, both the larger, and the shorter which we receive and teach. This truth so asserted in our publick standards, I shall explain in several distinct propositions.

I. Predestination unto life respects only *some* of mankind. It can't respect all, inasmuch as all the children of men will not be finally sav'd. As there are evidently two sorts of persons in the world now, good and bad, so we are sure from the word of God there will be found two very different sorts of persons at the great day, who will be dealt with after a very different

ent manner ; the righteous and the wicked. *These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* * And if all mankind are not finally sav'd, to be sure they were not originally predestinated unto life ; for the decree of God can't be frustrated. He hath said, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* || *There is a remnant,* says the apostle, *according to the election of grace,* Rom. 11. 5. and a remnant can't be all. So in the 11th v. *The election hath obtain'd it, and the rest were blinded.* The common distinction therefore of the elect, and non-elect, is just and necessary. When some are chosen out of many, the rest must of consequence be left, or the very notion of election is destroy'd.

2. These were *personally* chosen and pitch'd upon in the purpose and decree of God concerning them. Some will have the election the scripture speaks of, to be only of qualifications, and not of persons ; but this is meer evasion and trifling. The scripture plainly speaks of an election of persons. *Whom* he did fore-know, says the text, *them* he did predestinate. These our saviour stiles † the *men* that the father had

* Mat. 25. 46. || Isa. 46. 10. † Joh. 17. 6.
given

given him out of the world, and their names * are said to be written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.

3. Those who are predestinated unto life and happiness as the *end*, are also predestinated unto faith and holiness as the *way*. When God chuses persons to an end, he also determines the means to that end. The same decree that predestinates any persons to salvation, ascertains the means of attaining that salvation. These, according to the constitution of the gospel, are faith and holiness ; and so they come under the same decree by which any are predestinated unto glory. The elect are not predestinated unto life, provided they perform the conditions of salvation, do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are holy, in which they are left entirely to their own will and choice. No ; the predestination we are speaking of, is no such conditional uncertain thing as this makes it to be. The objects of it are by one determinate decree appointed to a certain salvation, which they shall obtain thro' faith and sanctification, which are given them in consequence of the decree. So the Apostle tells the

Rev. 17. 8.

believing

believing and sanctified *Thessalonians*, 2 ep. 2. ch. 13. v. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And our text tells us, whom God fore-knew, he predestinated to be *conform'd to the image of his son*; in which is included the whole of that work of sanctification by which they are *made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.* Col. 1. 12.

4. Predestination unto life is *from everlasting*. Therefore those who are the objects of it, are said to be chosen *before the foundation of the world*, Eph. 1. 4. before the very first dawn of time, i. e. from all eternity. Tho' there is no inward nor visible difference between the elect and others, till the grace of God in their effectual calling in time makes it, yet the purpose of mercy concerning them was *before the mountains were settled, or the hills bro't forth; while God had not yet made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.* God's purposes are, like himself, eternal; for, such is his perfection that he comprehends all things referring to his creatures, together and at once, and no new thoughts or designs ever come into his

his mind, but what were there from eternity, in which there is no succession. And, O the pleasure! for any to follow God's thoughts concerning them so far back, as to apprehend him saying unto them, as to his church of old, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* †

5. It is a perfectly free and sovereign act of God. His distribution of rewards and punishments at the last day will be founded in justice, but his chusing some to make them the objects of his love, and passing by others, is founded in his sovereignty and supremacy, whereby he is Lord of all, and accountable to none. This is what proud mortals are loth to stoop to, and apt to rise up against; but let us be struck into an awful adoring silence, by what the apostle says of this matter, in Rom. 9 ch. from the 14th v. where the divine sovereignty is both asserted and pleaded for. *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him*

† Jer. 31. 3.

that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.---
 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet
 find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay,
 but O man, who art thou that repliest against
 God? Shall the thing formed say to him that
 formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath
 not the potter power over the clay, of the same
 lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another
 unto dishonour? The great God was under
 no necessity to chuse any of us unto eter-
 nal life. He would have been perfectly
 blessed himself, if our whole race had
 perish'd for ever. That he has chosen any
 is owing entirely to the good pleasure of
 his will. If he was pleas'd to make choice
 of any, he was under no necessity to pitch
 upon such and such. All the reason to be
 given is that, † *Even so father, for so it seem-
 eth good in thy sight!* There was nothing in
 the chosen remnant to move God to place
 his regards upon them before others. The
 fore-sight of their faith and obedience was
 not the cause; for, as we have had occasion
 to hint already, they were chosen *to* faith
 and obedience, and so it could not be *for*
 them; they are the effects of our election,
 and therefore cannot be the causes of it.
 God's fore-sight of their faith and holiness,

† Matt. II. 26.

presupposes his purpose to bestow faith and holiness on them ; and this very purpose is a part of their election it self. The apostle therefore tells us, Rom. 9. 11. That the purpose of God according to election, is *not of works, but of him that calleth.*

6. It is *certain, infallible, and irrevocable.* So are all the decrees of God, and therefore this of Predestination unto life. And if it were not so, the people of God could not take much comfort from it. God will never go back from his purpose to save his people ; for, * *He is of one mind, and who can turn him ?* What can induce him to alter his affection towards them ? For such is the perfection of his knowledge, that he can never be surpris'd by any sudden new event, that may cause a change in his mind and will. He fore-saw all the sins of his people, their undutiful and ungrateful carriage towards him thro' the whole course of their lives. Now, if the foresight of them did not hinder his electing love in its rise, can they frustrate its end, the bringing of them to glory ? — And whatever they need to have wrought in them, or done for them, is comprehended in one and the

* Job. 23. 13.

same decree concerning them, and so shall be accomplish'd by the power of God. The enemies that would hinder them, are indeed numerous and powerful ; but *the Father that gave them to Christ is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of his hand.* † Every thing will conspire, that the purpose of God according to election may stand, Rom 9. 11. The apostle speaks peremptorily, 2 Tim. 2. 9. *The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.*

7. It is in *Jesus Christ* that any are predestinated unto life. This is expressly said, Eph. 1. 4. *He, i. e. the Father, hath chosen us in him, i. e. Christ, before the foundation of the world.* Not that we are to suppose that the elect are chosen for the sake of Christ, or that he is the meritorious cause of their election. No; for tho' he has merited their salvation, purchas'd for them pardon, grace, and glory, he did not purchase their election, but they were consider'd *as elected* when they were given to Christ to redeem, and so election is not to be look'd upon as a purchased blessing. But they are said to be chosen in him, be-

† John 10. 29.

cause it is by virtue of that union with him, which is made in their effectual calling, that they come to be made partakers of those benefits to which they are chosen. The Lord Jesus Christ was in God's eternal purpose consider'd as the great Mediator by whom the salvation of his chosen people was to be brot' about ; and those ordain'd to salvation were given to Him, that he might rightfully entitle them to that salvation, and successfully bring them to it. Thus he stands as the head of the elect, and they are said to be chosen in him ; and he is spoken of as *set up from everlasting*, Pro. 8. 23. and is himself called God's *elect*, Isai. 42. 1. being himself chosen to be the mediator and redeemer by the same decree in which the elect among the children of men were chosen to salvation †.

† Doctor Goodwin observes, from Zanchy, There is a great deal of difference between God's doing a thing *in Christ* and *through Christ*, *ἐν Χριστῷ* and *διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. When God is said to do a thing *in Christ*, it usually notes out some one of those *immanent* acts of God towards us, that pass between him and Christ for us, when they were alone, before we existed, and Christ was a common person representing us all, and God gave all to Christ for

Once more,

8thly, The last and highest *end* of this is the *manifestation of the divine glory*, in the salvation of some of the fallen human race. The divine glory is the most excellent end that can possibly be aim'd at, and therefore an infinitely wise God cannot design any thing short of it, as the great motive or inducement for him to act; and so whatever lower ends are design'd by him, they must all be resolv'd into this as the principal. *For, of him, and thro' him, and to him are all things* †. The two attributes which God hath a peculiar design at the display and advancement of, in and by his reasonable

for us. So we read of *the grace that was given us in Christ Jesus before the world was.* 2 Tim. 1. 9. But things that God doth *through* Christ, are usually some *transient* acts of God towards us, or those things which he actually performeth and applieth to us thro' Christ. So that tho' God *redeemeth thro' Christ, justifieth thro' Christ, and saveth thro' Christ*, yet he *chooseth in Christ*; so that to *chuse in him* is not all one with what the apostle saith, *He hath ordained us to obtain salvation thro' Jesus Christ our Lord,* 1 Thes. 5. 9. *Goodwins Works, Vol. I. p. 58.*

† Rom. 11. 36.

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creatures, are his grace and his justice ; the former in them that are sav'd, and the latter in them that perish. This is plainly to be gather'd from those words of the apostle, Rom. 9. 22, 23. *What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction : And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?* The design then which lay at the bottom of God's decree of election, is the everlasting display of his sovereign and glorious grace to the worlds of intellectual creatures which he has made. To this the scriptures refer it, and in this they ultimately resolve it. Eph. 1. 5, 6, *Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,* TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE. And the same reason is given over again, in the 2 ch. 7 v. *That he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, thro' Jesus Christ.*

Thus I have, in several distinct propositions, explain'd and stated the truth before us. The time will not allow me to enter upon the second thing propos'd, the proof of the point, or to shew that this doctrine, as we have now represented it, is really the doctrine of the gospel. I shall therefore

therefore conclude the present discourse by adding a few words that have a tendency to give what has been already said, an enlivening and quickning efficacy upon our hearts.

1. Predestination unto life is a thing *secret* to us. Who the persons are that are the objects of it, God has not revealed. This is at present lock'd up within the divine breast. Yet we know,

2. It comprehends a *very great & glorious number*. Some have thought the elect among mankind, were to make up the number, and supply the room of the fallen angels. But this is an *extra-scriptural* conjecture ; and for ought we know they may be many more. To be sure they are a number sufficient to give the brightest display of the riches of free grace in ; and a number worthy of that infinite price, the blood of the son of God, which was laid down to redeem them. They are said to be *many* in our text. *Whom he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.* And they are said, in Rev. 7. 9. to be a *great multitude which no man can number*.

3. Some

3. Some of all sorts, conditions, and characters, are of this number. They are taken out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; and in the day when they shall be made up, shall be seen to come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south. † If not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are chosen and called, yet some are *. And, hearken my beloved brethren, says the apostle, Hath not God chosen out of the poor of this world, some to make them rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. || Yea, some who have been the greatest sinners, while in their unregenerate state, are of this number. The apostle tells the Corinthians, some of you were fornicators, idolators, adulterers, abusers of your selves with mankind; thieves, covetous, drunkards, extortioners, &c. but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. †

4. Some of them are bro't forth in every age of the world; that so Christ may have seed to serve him in every generation to the end of time, and there may be some to

† Rev. 7. 9. Luke 13. 29. * 1 Cor. 1. 26.

|| James 2. 5. † 1 Cor. 6. 11.

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ballance the world, even *a blessing in it*, * for whose sake it should not be destroyed.

5. Wherever the gospel is preach'd there are *some* of these to be gather'd in by it. It is more than probable that where God sends a faithful ministry, and the gospel is preach'd in the purity of it, He has a design to extend his saving grace to some among that people, whom he will by such a ministry effectually call, and bring home to himself. So the apostle *Paul* was sent to preach the gospel in *Corinth*, because God had *much people in that city*, Acts 18. 10.

It follows then, that this is no such discouraging doctrine as some would represent it. Since 'tis a secret with God who are predestinated unto life, and who are not; since the number of the elect is such a great number, an innumerable multitude; since a part of them are bro't forth in every age; since the greatest sinners may be of this number, and none are excluded on account of any outward circumstances; since the preaching of the gospel is the appointed means of gathering them in, and wherever the gospel is preach'd, we may suppose there are a number to be bro't by

*. Isa. 64. 8.

it to that faith and holiness, which is the predestinated way to eternal life; since, I say, these things are so, there is enough to prevent discouragement, to raise our hope of, and quicken our endeavours after salvation.

Therefore our way is, to accept of the general grace offered in the gospel, to devote and resign our selves to God, to depend upon the merits of our Redeemer, and put our selves under the teaching sanctifying influences of his Spirit, in the use of the appointed means, humbly waiting for his renewing and reconciling grace: Thus we may come to know the purposed love of God to us, that *he hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*. Instead then of rising up against, and quarrelling with what we have now heard, let us turn it into a prayer; and there can't be a better prayer after this sermon, than that which the Holy Ghost has put into our mouths, Psal. 106. 4, 5. *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people! O visit me with thy salvation! that I may see the good of thy chosen; that I may rejoice with the gladness of thy nation; that I may glory with thine inheritance!*

S E R M O N II.

R O M A N S, VIII. 29, 30.

For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.



HERE is an excellent and most wise order and connection in all that God brings to pass; and this order so settled and join'd together, that it can never be broken. The salvation of any of the children of fallen Adam, takes its rise in the eternal counsel, free purpose, and electing love of God. Whom

he did *fore-know*, and personally chuse to salvation, them he did *predestinate* to all the means which lead to that salvation. That which first follows predestination is *effectual calling*: Whom he did predestinate, says the text, *them he also called*. In his appointed time, by his word and spirit, he powerfully draws these to a thankful acceptance of, and firm reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ as their saviour, and an obedient *walking in him* as the way to eternal life. Upon this ensues their *justification*: Whom he called, *them he also justified*. Being united to Christ in their effectual calling, they are thro' him absolv'd from guilt, and accepted as righteous. Now, after their calling, they are *in Christ Jesus*, † and walk *not after the flesh but after the spirit*, and so no condemnation belongs to them. Upon these will finally follow their *glorification* in heaven, after they have glorified God on earth; in which God's design of love to them, will have its full and eternal accomplishment: Whom he justified, *them he also glorified*.

It was not my design, when I began upon these words the last Lords-day, to speak of all these privileges in the order in which

the text presents them ; but only of that which is the ground of them all, and from which the rest result, namely, *Election*, or *Predestination unto life* ; a plain and precious, but disrelish'd and oppos'd truth of the gospel. That I have taken this in hand, I'm sure is not from a love to controversy, or fondness to oppose the schemes of others, but, I hope, from a sincere desire to *fulfill the ministry of the Lord Jesus* which I have receiv'd among you, by testifying the *gospel of the grace of God* in all the parts of it. We trust, my Brethren, that we aim to speak, *not as pleasing men, but God* ; and therefore we dare not baulk any truth, in its proper place and season, because 'tis unfashionable, oppos'd by *the wisdom of the world*, or run down by popular outcry. Nor am I determin'd to this opinion by the prejudice of education, but because after careful searches and researches, I am convinc'd of the truth of it, upon what appears to me to be the strongest evidence ; and the more I enquire into it, the more I see it to agree with the holy scriptures, and the divine perfections.

It was the business of the former discourse to explain and state the truth under consideration. That which we are next to proceed to is to *prove* and *confirm* it. The point then to be now establish'd is this

“ That

“ That a certain, great and glorious number were elected by God, in his eternal counsel and purpose, from the rest of fallen mankind, to be in time effectually called and justified, in order to their being finally bro’t to eternal life and glory ; and this out of his meer good pleasure, and for the praise of his glorious grace. ” And if the truth of this is once evinced to the conviction of a sober, honest, and serious mind, it may be hop’d all disgust at it will cease, and every thought that *exalts it self* against it will be suppressed.

I. In the first place, this truth must be establish’d by the authority of the *sacred scriptures*. Hither we must refer the decision of all points in religion. Here we must repair to know of every doctrine *whether it be of God*. Now, *What saith the scripture* concerning this doctrine? And surely *he that runs may read* this truth throughout the sacred pages.

Let me prepare the way to the more direct and positive proof I shall fetch from the *bible*, by first of all presenting you with some scripture instances of a *lower election*, of God’s chusing and predestinating certain persons by name, and some of them long before they were born, to some special privileges, high honours, and signal services

ces in the world. And if these may'nt be taken for positive proof of that election we are treating of, yet they will serve greatly to illustrate it, and they are by very judicious Divines look'd upon as examples and patterns of it, inasmuch as they plainly shew that the glorious God does act with respect to the children of men, with a sovereign liberty, and in a way of discriminating favour; yea, many of them were instances of the *very election* we are now to exhibit the proof of, inasmuch as it plainly appears by the account the scripture gives of them, that at the same time they were called to those external privileges and temporal honours to which they were chosen, they were also called to the spiritual and saving blessings of the covenant of grace.

Thus *Abraham* was pitch'd upon to be the root and father of God's peculiar people, whom he would own and honour above all the nations of the world; and also to be one from whose loins the Messiah himself should descend. Gen. 12. beg n. Now the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.

And

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. A high honour and advancement indeed! Yet he was more blessed in those spiritual blessings which accompanied it. For he was at the same time made a justified believer; as we read, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* † He had a covenant interest in and relation to God, and such acceptance with the Almighty, as to be spoken of in this stile, *The friend of God.* * And was there any thing in *Abraham*, to move God thus to prefer him above the rest of his kindred? No, in no wise. It was all special grace and favour. For he was a stupid idolater as well as the rest of his family, and had serv'd God no better than they. The scripture represents God as acting herein with a sovereign liberty, and by a free hand of mercy snatching him as a brand out of the burning. *Joshua*, in God's name, declares this to the tribes of *Israel* when they were assembled at *Shechem*, *Josh. 24. 2, 3.* Thus saith the Lord God of *Israel*. Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the great river, in old time, even *Terah* the father of *Abraham*, and the father of *Nachor*; and

Rom. 4. 3. * James 2. 23.

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they

they served other God's. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, &c. For this God is ador'd long after in a solemn assembly of the children of Israel, Neh 9 7, 8. Thou art the Lord the God, who didst chuse Abram, and broughtest him for h out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham, and madest a covenant with him. And when the prophet had occasion to put that people in mind of their original, he does it in these terms, Mai. 51. 2, 3. Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bear you ; for I called him alone, and blessed him.

With the like sovereign liberty he acted with respect to *Abraham's* seed. He takes not all of them ; but in *Isaac* shall thy seed be called †. Thus *Isaac* was taken, and not *Ishmael*. And tho' in answer to *Abraham's* prayer for *Ishmael*, common blessings are secur'd to him, yet covenant blessings are reserv'd for *Isaac*, and appropriated to him who was not yet born. Gen. 17. 18, 19, 20. And *Abraham* said unto God, O that *Ishmael* might live before thee ! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed ; and thou

† Gen. 21. 12.

shalt call his name Isaac : And I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee : Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly : twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

The like sovereignty was exercis'd in the case of Jacob and Esau, whose story is recorded in the 25th ch. of Genesis, and is recited and refer'd to by the apostle in the 9th ch. to the Romans, to illustrate and confirm the truth we are establishing. They were both the sons of Isaac by one mother, and were twin-brethren. But there was a difference made between them by the divine counsel, before they were born. Both lay struggling alike in their mothers womb, when it was said, * *The younger shall serve the elder.* And contrary to the intention of Isaac, Jacob inherits the blessing. And tho' the good father blessed Jacob unwittingly, and by mistake, yet, being afterwards convinc'd that he was the person for whom God design'd the blessing, and on

* Gen. 25. 22, 23.

whose head it was to rest by the divine determination, he acquiesc'd in the will of God, tho' it contradicted his own apprehension and affection; and was so far from reversing what he had done that he repeats it and passionately affirms it, † *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be bless'd.* And tho' *Jacob* acted a dishonest and sinful part, (of which he was afterwards no doubt made sensible, and bro't to repentance for it, and so mercifully pardon'd of the free grace of God thro' the promised *Messiah*) yet *Isaac* in his blessing him, and not reversing it, was under the conduct and influence of the divine Spirit; for we are told, *Heb. 11. 20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob, and Esau, concerning things to come.* Here *Jacob* is put first by the apostle, tho' the younger, as having the precedency, and a better blessing. It is indeed a strange story! And if the design and meaning of it be enquir'd after, the apostle explains it thus, in *Romans* the 9th ch. 11 v. *That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.* 1. e. says Mr. Henry on the place, "That this great truth may be establish'd, that God choiceth some, and refuseth others, as a free agent,

† Gen. 27. 33.

by his own absolute and sovereign will, dispensing his favours, or withholding them, as he pleaseth."

And if we look to the posterity of *Jacob*, the *Israelites*, this people the Lord chose in *Abraham*, four hundred years before he publickly own'd them. They are expressly term'd an *elect nation*, as being distinguish'd from the rest of the world; an *holy*, special, and *peculiar* people unto God. When he *divided to the nations their inheritance, and separated the sons of Adam*, He took these for his own portion, the lot of his inheritance; tho' the earth was his to chuse a people out of to his name. And their history, from the time of their being first form'd into a people, abundantly shews the special and peculiar love of God to them, above all other people in the world. Because they were precious in his sight, and honourable, therefore he gave men for them, and people for their life, when their preservation and interests call'd for it; yea, he gave Egypt for their ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for them.* And says why did the Lord take these? What was there to intitle them to this distinguishing honour? Did he chuse them because they were a better people, or a greater nation?

Deut. 32. 8, 9. * Isa. 43. 3.

No

No such matter. *Moses* tells them, *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. *The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor chuse you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people. And as their number was small, so their disposition was bad and their manners ill. They were a peevish and humourfome people, froward and perverse, obstinate and incorrigible; strangely addicted to the idolatries of Egypt, and other nations. The Lord fore-saw this before he chose them; for he tells them by the prophet, Isai. 48. 4. 8 I knew that thou wouldest deal treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb. I knew that thou wast obstinate, thy neck an iron sinew, and thy brow bras.* I have even from the beginning declared it unto thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee. Therefore the only reason assign'd why God set his love upon them as he did, is this, *because he loved them.* All was from free favour, to manifest his sovereignty, and because he had his elect among them, in a still higher and more appropriate sense. So God said to *Moses*, *Exod. 33. 19. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy to whom I will shew mercy.*

If we go on to name *David*, He, the most unlikely among the sons of *Jesse*, was chosen to be the king of *Israel*. He was the youngest

youngest of the family, employ'd in the meanest service, to keep the sheep, ; scarce reckon'd as one of the family, for he was not bro't in amongst the rest, when Samuel was sent to anoint *him whom the Lord had chosen*. But when all the other had been refus'd as they pass'd before Samuel, tho' several of them stood fair in the eye of the prophet, and David was at last fetch'd; as soon as he appear'd the Lord said, *Arise, anoint him, for this is he.* † The peculiarity of the divine choice appearing in this instance, the psalmist sings of, Pla. 78. 70, 71. *He chose David also his servant, and took him from among the sheep-folds ; from following the ewes great with young, he bro't him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.*

Another remarkable instance was Cyrus. This man was design'd in the purpose of God for great and noble work ; to destroy a mighty monarchy, release God's people out of captivity, and rebuild his temple. It was foretold what great things should be done by him, more than an hundred years before he was born ; and he was called by his name too : And this not from any worthyness in himself, for 'tis said he *did not so much as know the Lord*. This famous

† 1 Sam. 16. 12.

man and his wondrous actions, were prophesied of so long before hand, by the prophet *Isaiah*, in the latter part of the 44th, and the beginning of the 45th chapters of his book. Thus saith the Lord, that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight; I will brake in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places; that thou mayst know, that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servants sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have even surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

The prophet *Jeremy* was likewise ordained to great things before he was born. To him God said, Jer. 1. 5. Before I formed thee

thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

And of the apostle Paul the Lord said, He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and to suffer great things for my names sake, Acts 9. 15. He, afterwards speaking of his conversion, and call to the apostleship, ascribes them to the powerful grace of God, in consequence of his previous purpose and fore-ordination. Gal. 1. 15, 16. It pleased God, who separated me from my mothers womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen. Now, shall we say that these, and other such instances on sacred record, are to be consider'd only as historical relations? Surely that would be too low and narrow a meaning for them. According to the apostle's reasoning in the 9th ch. to the Romans, in the cases of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, it is very plain they were intended for the illustrating the methods of God's grace towards particular persons. And, I think, it is justly inferr'd and argu'd, "If there be an election personal unto things of a temporal concernment, and that so long before some of the persons were in being, how much more unto things of a spiritual and eternal concernment? And if the Lord did not look

out of himself for the moving considerations on which he selected these persons to their several privileges and honours, much less can election unto life be founded in any deservings of the creature. From the less to the greater is a scriptural way of arguing, and in many cases proves strongly "†

But I proceed to exhibit that more *direct* and *positive proof* which the *bible* furnishes us with. There we read abundantly of an election which can be understood of no other than a personal election unto eternal life as the end, and unto Christ, and faith, and holiness as the way. And tho' we find this doctrine in the *old testament*, in the writings of *Moses* and the *prophets*; as appears from some of the scriptures we have had occasion already to mention, and from others which I might turn you to *; yet I shall here look only into the *new testament* where the mysteries of godliness are more

† Mr. Cole in his Discourse on the Sovereignty of GOD.

* 1 Kings 19. 18. compar'd with Rom. 11. 2, 3. 4, 5. Isai. 1. 9. compar'd with Rom. 9. 29. Isai. 10. 21, 22. compar'd with Rom. 9. 27. 29. Jer. 18. 6. compar'd with Rom. 9. 20, 21. Psal. 106. 4, 5. Isai. 65. 8, Jer. 50. 20. Mic. 7. 18.

manifest, and things that have been *hid from ages and generations* are discover'd.

I shall not distribute the scriptures I shall mention into any other order than that which the *bible* presents them in : And so we must begin with some passages in the discourses of our blessed SAVIOUR himself, by which it will appear that HE taught this very doctrine ; He, who is *the faithful and true witness*, and well knew what doctrine was safe and profitable to teach, as well as true. I think the first passage we meet with to our purpose, if we read the evangelists in the order of an *harmony*, as in the sermon which Christ preach'd to the people at *Nazareth*, Luke 4. 25, 26, 27. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was in all the land ; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Zidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them were healed save Naaman the Syrian. The manifest design of our saviour in these two examples, is to assert the sovereignty of God in the dispensations of his favour ; and let them know, that as the prophet *Elijah* was sent to relieve a favourite widow, and the prophet *Elisha* to heal a distinguish'd leper,

leper, so he came with a commission and design to save, not all, but a select number, of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And it seems they could not bear this doctrine even in those days : For it follows, *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of a hill, that they might cast him down headlong.* But this did not cause him to suppress the truth, or wave it, when he had occasion to mention it, whether in his prayers or sermons. --- At a time when he had been reproving and threatening the places where he had preach'd the gospel, for their impenitence and unbelief, he comforts himself with the thoughts that there was a number upon whom the word had come with a saving light and power, pursuant to the purpose and pleasure of the father ; whom he adores as the proprietor and disposer of all spiritual and heavenly blessings, and whose free dispensation of his favours, he most heartily approves of, and acquiesces in, *Mat. 11. 25, 26. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight ! ----* At another time when his disciples express'd their

selve

selves something surpriz'd that he taught
 the people in parables, without an expo-
 sition to let them into the meaning of what
 he deliver'd to them, explaining things
 only to their small and select company in
 a private way, and desired a reason of this
 his conduct ; he answers them in such a
 manner as to let them know, that spiritual
 light and knowledge, a saving discovery of
 gospel truths, were given to some, and to
 themselves in particular, in a way of free
 special distinguishing favour ; but withheld
 from others according to God's wise holy
 and sovereign pleasure : He said unto them,
Because it is given to you to know the mysteries
of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not
given, Mat. 13. 10, 11. — So when, on
 another occasion, there were some who
 complain'd against the method he observ'd
 in the bestowment of his bounty and
 mercy, He in reply to them, vindicates his
 own right to dispose of the blessings of the
 gospel as he saw meet, because he was the
 sovereign proprietor thereof, and none
 could claim what he did not see cause to
 give. Mat. 20. 15, 16. *Is it not lawful for*
me to do what I will with mine own ? Is
mine eye evil, because I am good ? So the last
shall be first, and the first last ; for many be
called, but few chosen. And when, a little
 after this, the mother of Zebedees children,
 who

who had entertain'd the notion of a temporal kingdom which Christ was about to set up, came to him with that ambitious request, that her *two sons* might be his chief favourites and ministers, *might set the one on his right hand, the other on his left in his kingdom*; in his answer to her he not only lets her know she was mistaken about the nature of his kingdom, which was not of this world, but that the donatives and honours of it, were long since settled, and were to be dispos'd of by him to those persons for whom they were design'd in the Father's counsel and purpose, and to no other. He said, *To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but to those for whom it is prepared of my father.* — In the 13th ch. of *Mark*, our saviour fore-tells the unparalleled distress and desolation which would come upon the *Jews*, when the *Roman* armies should make a descent upon *Judea*, and invest *Jerusalem*, the holy city; whose power and rage would be so great as to make even a full end of that people, if the merciful providence of God did not interpose, to restrain and limit them. Such a remembrance of mercy in the midst of this judgment he gives them the promise of; but withal lets them know this favour would be shewn them, for the sake of a chosen number; that such of his elect “ as were
“ then

“ then living in their sins, and those of
 “ them who were to descend from the
 “ loins of some of that age, might be bro’t
 “ to faith and repentance ; and that they
 “ together with the already converted,
 “ might be preserved for the propagation
 “ of his kingdom in the world ; the 19, and
 20th verses, *For in those days shall be affliction,*
such as was not from the beginning of the crea-
tion which God created, unto this time. And
except the Lord had shortned those days, no flesh
should be saved ; but for the elects sake whom
he hath chosen, he hath shortned the days: Our
 saviour goes on in the next verses, to fore-
 tell that *false christs*, and *false prophets* would
 arise at that time ; so plausible in their pre-
 tences, so artful in their managements, and
 so industrious to seduce, that they would
 deceive and draw away *the very elect* them-
 selves, were not their perseverance in the
 faith secur’d by the purpose of God con-
 cerning them, and their seduction & over-
 throw thereby rendred *impossible* ———.
 In the 6th ch. of *John*, we have our blessed
 Lord complaining of the unbelief of the
 generality of those who had both seen his
 miracles and heard his preaching ; yet com-
 forting himself, and refreshing others who
 wish’d to see his saving work go on, with
 the thought, that a goodly number would
 after all believe and be saved ; even as many

as the father had given to him for his charge and care. The 36, 37, 38, & 39th, verses; *I have said to you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the father hath given me, shall come to me: --- for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should loose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day* —

In the 10th chap. he speaks of his own redemption, as being of just the same extent with the Fathers election; represents himself as under a necessity to bring all that belong'd to this election, into his church, and a participation of the blessings of the gospel, by the influences of his spirit accompanying his word, because he could not otherwise discharge his trust, and fulfill the engagements he had enter'd into, and speaks of the continued unbelief of those to whom he preach'd the gospel, as a sign they were not included in this number. The 15th, 16th, 26th, 27th, & 28th verses; *I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*

and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my fathers hand ; whose power is also engag'd for their preservation, and from whom I am never separated in council and working. It is true, The calling of the *Gentiles* into the church is referr'd to in what is said in the 16th v ; but to restrain all that our Saviour has here said to the calling of *them* as a body, appears to be very contrary to the run of his discourse, wherein by the sheep which he speaks of as belonging to himself in the quality of a shepherd, is evidently meant a select number out of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* both —. In the 13th ch. of this same gospel, our Saviour giving an intimation to his disciples of the damning sin of *Judas* just before he committed it, makes this distinction between him and the rest of the apostles, I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen, v. 13. The choice must refer to salvation, and not to the apostleship, for to this he was chosen, as much as the other apostles ; wherefore he says in another place, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one

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*of you is a devil? * — Our Saviour, as he began, so, he ends his ministry with this doctrine: For his parting prayer with his disciples, just before he left them and the world, is full of it. It is recorded in the 17th ch. of John's gospel; and plainly shews that as in his mediatorial undertaking, he was concern'd with a peculiar number given him by way of distinction out of mankind in general, so these only were interested in this intercessory prayer, as those to whom the blessings he ask'd for and claim'd, did rightfully belong. These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that*

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- * It is manifest to me, that Christ here means a more peculiar and beneficial election, than to the office of Apostles; for he had chosen them all to this. But he here speaks of a discriminating choice of some of them, which did not extend to them all, and particularly to Judas: And to shew that his knowing whom he had chosen, related not to their temper and disposition, but to the persons themselves, he did not say, I know, ~~what~~ what their qualities are, but, ~~as~~ the persons whom I have chosen. GUYSE's excellent Paraphrase, in the margin.

he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. --- I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world ; thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them ; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. Keep thro' thy own name, those whom thou hast given me. Sanctifie them thro' thy truth. Let them be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. And that none might restrain this prayer to the apostles, our saviour shews how extensive it was in the intention of it ; that it included all that in every age should obtain the faith of God's elect. v. 20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me thro' their word. — Thus far we have quoted the words of Christ Himself, the great prophet of the church ; who, came from the bosom of the father, the seat of his counsels as well as love, and therefore was well able to reveal the secrets of heaven to men upon earth ; and was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

The *disciples* whom our Lord sent forth to preach under the special guidance of his spirit; and the *apostles* who were train'd up for the work of the ministry under the *personal instructions* of their divine master, or were taught the gospel they were to preach by *immediate revelation* from Christ himself; they taught this doctrine after him without the least hesitation, and preach'd and wrote in the same strain with him.

The Evangelist *Luke*, (who was very probably one of the seventy disciples, and with good reason is suppos'd to have wrote the narrative of *the Acts of the Apostles*, as well as the third of the four gospels which bears his name) giving an account of the success of the gospel among the *Gentiles*, upon the *Jews* refusal of it, makes the work of saving faith in those in whom it was wro't, to be the result of that act of grace which we call predestination. Acts 13. 48. *And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ORDAINED unto eternal life believed.*

The apostle *Paul*, the great doctor of the *Gentiles*, was a zealous assertor of this truth in almost all his *epistles*. When he writes to those in *Rome* who were *beloved of God*, and

and called to be saints, he takes care to let them know the ground of all the privileges they enjoy'd in time, and of that happiness they hop'd for thro' eternity, was laid in God's free electing love. The 8th ch. at the 28th v. *And we know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called* ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. Then follows the words of our Text, *For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* And to shew the immutability of this electing love of God, and that nothing should hinder the objects of it from being put into the actual possession of the grace and glory to which they were design'd, he leads them into that noble triumph with which the chapter ends, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? — Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? — I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. —* In the 9th chapter he goes on to illustrate this doctrine

doctrine from particular instances, and to vindicate it against some objections. When Rebecca had conceived twins by our father Isaac, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated; tho' the children being not yet born, had done neither good nor evil: That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. For the scripture saith to Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? Some will reply to this, and say, It is not a personal, but a national preference which is here spoken of; and the apostle does not refer to Jacob and Esau in their single capacity, or to the spiritual and everlasting state of either of them; but intends only their

their posterity, and the difference made between the *Israelites* and the *Edomites*, in the external dispensations of providence; which he mentions to justify God, and silence the *Jews* from complaining, tho' they were cast off, and the *Gentiles* called in their room. But tho' *Jacob* and *Esau* are here spoken of with respect to their descendents, it does not follow that they are not to be personally consider'd also; especially since *Pharaoh* is mentioned, and bro't in as an instance with them. And whoever attends to the manner of the apostles discourse, I think must see that he has something higher than any temporal concerns of men in his eye all along, and refers to their spiritual & everlasting state. Why else does he draw that inference from it in the 16 v; *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy?* And speak in the 22 and 23 verses, of God's *shewing his wrath, and making his power known, on the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, whom he here endured with much long suffering; and his displaying the riches of his glory, in the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?* In the 11th chap. he further vindicates the divine conduct in casting off the *Jews*, and reconciles it both with the promise made unto the fathers, and with the divine
goodness

goodness in general : And he does this by asserting *an election of grace* among that people, which wou'd certainly take effect. The rejection, he says, was not *total*. They were cast off indeed, but not *all*. There was a *chosen remnant* among them, that obtain'd righteousness and life by faith in Jesus Christ, tho' the body of that people remain'd in unbelief ; of which number he reckons himself to be *one* ; and he suggests too that it was a *larger number* than some might imagine, as was the number of the chosen, preserv'd and faithful, in the days of *Elias*. From the 1st to the 7th v. I say then, hath God cast away his people ? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he FORE-KNEW. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of *Elias* ? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars ; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him ? I have reserv'd to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this time also there is a REMNANT ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE. And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more

more work. *What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but THE ELECTION HATH OBTAIN'D IT, and the rest were blinded.*

He begins his epistle to the *Ephesians* with a most devout and solemn thanksgiving to God, for those spiritual blessings wherewith believers are blessed; and not only mentions their election and predestination as *one*, but as the secret spring from whence all the rest do flow. Chap. I. v. 3, 4, 5: *Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ: ACCORDING AS HE HATH CHOSEN US IN HIM, BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace. Surely this must contain much more than their being appointed to the outward privileges of the church state of the gospel; for tho' this is a great favour, yet all who are thus favour'd can't be said to be blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in Christ, as those here spoken of are said to be. The apostle leaves us at a loss about the persons here intended; for he calls them in the 1st v. The saints at Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus; and*

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they are farther described in the 7th v. as having *redemption thro' his blood, even the forgiveness of sins* ; which things can't be said to belong to those who are no more than visible or nominal christians —.

To the *Theſſalonians* he writes, as *knowing their election of God*, because the gospel had come to them, *not in word only but in power* ; which plainly shews something more is intended than their election to the injoyment of the gospel ; for its coming in *word only* would have been a sufficient proof of that. 1 *Ep.* 1. ch. 45. v. This is farther explain'd, in his 2d epistle, the 2. ch. at the 13th & 14 verses ; where the gospel is considered as the means of their attaining that salvation which they are said to be chosen to ; for he says to them, *God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, thro' sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth ; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ* —. Hitherto our quotations have been out of those Epistles of Paul which are directed to churches. He also wrote some to particular persons ; as to *Timothy* his own son in the faith, to direct him how to discharge his office as an Evangelist. Him he charges to *hold fast the form of sound words*, which he had heard from himself ;

and we find this to be some of those sound words, a part of the christian doctrine in which he instituted this young divine ; That salvation takes its rise, from the free grace, and eternal purpose of God in Jesus Christ. 2 ep. 1 ch. 9th v. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling ; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* That he might be willing to do and suffer any thing, to promote the salvation of others, he proposes to him his own example, in the 2 ch. the 10th v. *I endure all things for the ELECTS SAKE, that they may obtain the salvation in Christ Jesus, to which they are design'd.* And lest he shou'd be discourag'd when corrupt teachers shou'd advance dangerous and destructive opinions, as *Hymences* and *Philetus* had done, and the faith of many nominal christians shou'd be *overthrown* by them, he lets him know, That as many as God had set apart for himself, would be preserved thro' faith unto salvation, v. 19. *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.* Nor does he leave this out of the scheme of principles he taught *Titus*, another *Evangelist* ; whose business was to water the churches planted by the apostles, and to strengthen and carry on the work

which *they* had begun. In the preface of his epistle to him, he speaks of himself, as a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness: in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began. In the body of the epistle he charges him, to speak the things which become sound doctrine; and not only to inculcate the duties of practical religion, but to set forth the free grace of God in man's salvation by Jesus Christ; and to urge obedience from this peculiar motive of the gospel, the end of Christ's death, *Who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purifie to himself a PECULIAR PEOPLE, who should be zealous of good works.* Tit. I ch. I, 2. v. 2 ch. I. 13, 14. v. 3 ch. 4, 5, 6. verse.

There was a union of the other apostles with Paul in teaching this doctrine. It is more than implied in those words of James, (ch. I. v. 18) *Of his own will he hath us with the word of truth, &c.* His own will there, means nothing less than his purpos'd grace: It is the same with what the apostle Paul calls his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself. † And when

† Eph. I. 9.

he is warning against a partial regarding the rich, and despising the poor, he shews this to be very contrary to God's method in dispensing spiritual favours. The 2d ch. 5th v. *Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not God CHOSEN the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

The apostle Peter will not leave this subject untouch'd. Writing to the christians driven by persecution from their own country into places where they were *strangers*, he addresses them in this stile, *ELECT according to the fore-knowledge of God the father, thro' sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*. He distinguishes between them and others, in the next ch. at the 8th and 9th verses; Others, he says, took offence at Christ, and stumbled at his word, *being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed*; but these were a CHOSEN GENERATION, a PECULIAR PEOPLE, *to shew forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light*. And in his next epistle, the 1st, ch. the 10th v. he exhorts them to *give diligence to make their calling, and therein their election sure*; i. e. sure to themselves, with respect to their own comfortable knowledge of it, as it was already sure with respect to the decree and purpose of God.

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The testimonies shall finish with *John*, as his writings close the book of God. He was especially the disciple of love, and his *epistles*, as well as his gospel, breath the electing love of God. In his first epistle the 14th ch. the 19th v. He makes the antecedent eternal love of God to *us*, not only the incentive, but the *rise* and *spring* of the believers love to *him*; *We love him, because he first loved us.* And he inscribes his second epistle, to an honourable matron, whom he calls *the elect Lady*; not only a choice one, but one chosen of God — Nor is the book of the *Revelation* which *Jesus Christ* made to him silent about this truth. There we are told, *That all that dwell in the earth shall worship the beast, and be deceived by satan, either in doctrine or practice, to their perdition, excepting those whose names are written in the lambs book of life from the foundation of the world*; 13th ch. 8. v. 17. ch. 8 v. And in the 14th verse, the followers of the lamb have this description and character given of them, *they are called, and chosen, and faithful*. Finally, we are told in the 21 ch. 27th v. *Who shall gain admission into the new Jerusalem, the Jerusalem which is above, the city of the living God; that there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but*
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THEY WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE. This expression frequently occurs in the sacred stile. Of some particular saints we read, (Phil. 4. 3.) *their names are in the book of life.* And the whole body of them are stiled, (Heb. 12. 23.) *The church of the first-born written in heaven.* All which places refer to the common usage among men, of keeping books of record, in which are entred the names of persons admitted into their community, and all elections to offices among them : And so in this metaphorical way of speaking, the scripture represents the great discriminating favour of *eternal election.*

It appears from all, that the doctrine we are treating of, is no scatter'd, single, or independent article ; but runs along with the *stream* of the bible. “ We have “ not this truth as *the small drop of a bucket,* “ but as *the sound of many waters.* If these texts do not mean what we are maintaining, to *me* they mean nothing at all. And however one or two of them may be artfully evaded, or turn'd to another sense by the *slight* of any ; † yet they who deny our

† If any would see a number of the scriptures we have mention'd rescu'd from the strange and unnatural interpretations of *Hammond,*
Whitby,

doctrine must fight with *an exceeding great army* of scriptures, and contend with *Moses* and the *Prophets*, CHRIST and his *Apostles*. And thus we see what we have asserted, strongly establish'd by the *authority of the holy scriptures*.

II. We may argue this truth from the *divine perfections*; particularly, from the infinite *wisdom*, and certain *fore-knowledge* of God.

I. From the infinite *wisdom* of God, in conjunction with his *power*. Whatever God does, he must be suppos'd to have before *determin'd* to do: This must be allow'd or else it wou'd argue him defective in *wisdom*. And whatever he determines to do he must *accomplish*, or it wou'd argue him defective in *power*. I find this tho't so well pursu'd by a late rational and sound *Divine*, * that I will take the liberty to use his words, with but little variation.

“ It must be allow'd that whatever perfection or excellency is to be found in any creature, the same must be essential to the

Whitby, and others; let them consult, Doctor *Edwards's Veritas Redux*, and the late Doctor *Ridgley's Body of Divinity*.

* The Rev. Mr. *Sladen*.

most

most high God, and that in the most eminent and transcendent degree. For, if every creature derives its being from God, as the first cause, then no creature can possibly be possess'd of any excellency, but what must, in the highest and most absolute sense, belong to God —. Now, no one can deny that it is an excellency in any creature to be wise and powerful; wise to lay a scheme of what he intends to do, and powerful to perform and accomplish what he designs. For a rational being to set about a work, without first forming in his mind a *model* of what he intends to pursue, is to discover a defect of wisdom; as not to be able to accomplish the plan he hath laid down, bewrays a want of power. — These premises being granted, which indeed cannot be denied, it must follow, that whatever the great God does he design'd to do; and whatever he design'd to do he does. For, to suppose God to perform any work which he did not before design to perform, is to charge him with a degree of folly, and with acting below an intelligent agent; as to suppose him to design a thing which he does not effect, is to tax him with impotence. If then it is an instance of the wisdom and power of man, first to design a work, and then to perfect it, the great God,

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who is infinite in both these perfections, must design what he effects, and effect what he designs. To this decision of *reason* the sacred scriptures bear their testimony in the fullest and strongest manner. With how much majesty does the great God deliver himself in those words, *Isai. 46, 10, 11? I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. ----* To apply this to the great work of fallen man's redemption. Either God actually saves all men, or he does not; if he does, he must have design'd it; if he does not, 'tis plain he never design'd it. All that God design'd to save, he saves; but he actually saves *some* only, therefore he design'd only to save some of fallen *Adam's* children. Now, if we consider God as infinite in wisdom, and of almighty power, there cannot be a more rational way of arguing, than from his acts to his designs."

2. The very *Fore-knowledge* of God argues the same thing. That *known to God are all his works from the beginning*, † will be

† Acts 15. 8.

easily granted. Few, if any among us, are dispos'd to deny this, That God did from all eternity fore-know who shou'd be saved. He must then fore-know that the requisite qualifications to salvation shou'd be found in them; that they wou'd *repent*, and *believe*, and *obey the gospel*; for none can be sav'd without these. And since the scripture is plain that these are God's *gift*, of *his working* wherever they are found, he cannot be said to have fore-known that these wou'd so repent and believe, without an unalterable *determination* in his own mind to *bestow* these saving graces on *them in particular*. Therefore, Fore-knowledge and predestination are link'd together in our text, *Whom he did fore-know, them he did predestinate*. I take this argument to be conclusive. It is that upon which the great Doctor *Twiss* mainly rests the cause, in his learned defence of this truth against the opposers of his day. And it was this convinc'd the celebrated Dr. *South*, and brought him into those principles called *Calvinian*. It will not be foreign to my purpose, and possibly it may more than inform and please some, if I shou'd insert a short account of that matter into this discourse. I have it then from very good authority,

authority, † that this eminent person, sometime after the restoration, being in company at *Oxford* with several persons of note, and among the rest with Mr. *Thomas Gilbert*, who was afterwards one of the ejected ministers, they fell into a conversation about the *arminian* points. And altho' it was more than suspected that Dr. *South*, who fell in with the new conformity, did also incline to the new divinity of that time, yet upon Mr. *Gilberts* asserting that the *Predestination* of the *Calvinists* did necessarily follow upon the *Prescience* of the *Arminians*, the Doctor presently engag'd that if he would make that out, he would never be an *Arminian* so long as he liv'd. Mr. *Gilbert* immediately undertook it, and made good his assertion to the satisfaction of those present; and the Doctor himself was so convinc'd, as to continue to the last a very zealous assertor of the reform'd doctrine against its various opposers — And thus the truth we are maintaining may be argued from the divine perfections.

III. It may also be argued from the dispensations of providence and grace; in giving

† Dr. *Calamy's* continuation of the account of the silenced ministers, Vol. 1st. p. 146.

the gospel to some people, and not to others ; and in blessing the preaching of it for saving good to some who enjoy it, and not to others.

I. In giving the gospel to some and not to others. In order to compleat the salvation of men, the redemption purchased must be applied ; and in order to this application there are means appointed and made necessary by God's institution : these are the word and ordinances of the gospel. For, as says the apostle, Rom. 10. 14. *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ? And how shall they hear without a preacher ?* Now, the gospel of salvation is sent to some places, and not to others ; and this by a special providence. Not only the doctrine, but the journeys and travels of the apostles, were under the direction of the spirit of God. Acts 16. 6, 7. *Now when they were gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia : but the spirit suffered them not.* Agreeably when the apostle Paul was preaching the gospel at Antioch, he told the people of that place (Acts, 13. 26.) *Men and brethren, to you is the word of this*

this salvation SENT. Not so much bro't by us as sent by God. And this disposition of providence cannot be accounted for but by an election of grace to be gather'd in from among such a people. This was given as the reason why *Paul* was sent to preach the gospel at *Corinth*, Acts 18. 9, 10. *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, saying, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee ; for I HAVE MUCH PEOPLE in this city.* And so the preaching of the gospel in other *Gentile* places is accounted for, Acts 15. 14. *James answered saying, Ye have heard how God hath visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.*

2. In blessing the means of grace for saving good to some who enjoy them, and not to others. *The wind blows where it listeth ;* and the holy spirit works by the ministry of the word, to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. † One is awakn'd, convinced, pricked to the heart by a sermon ; another in the same seat, under the same sermon, feels nothing. Sometimes the most *unlikely* are taken and effectually called, while others are left : And this after many years delay and dis-

† Phil. 2. 13.

couragement, and no hopeful prospect, but the contrary. Some out of *wicked families* are converted ; others, after a strict and religious education, become vile and profligate. What *different success* hath the gospel at some times, and in some places ; and at different times in the *same* place ? Tho' the same message, and the same preacher. Is there not an open *display* of the sovereignty of divine grace in all this ? Surely the conversion of sinners is *according to his purpose*, as to the *subjects* themselves, and also as to the time and season of their change, and the means and method by which it is accomplished.

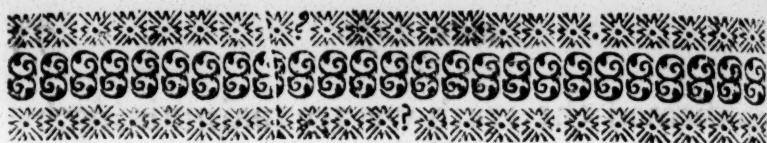
Once more,

IV. Such an election as we are treating of, is *necessary to secure to the Lord Jesus Christ what he purchased by his death*. It wou'd be very dishonourable to suppose that Christ undertook the great and difficult work of mans redemption ; that he came into our world, suffer'd and died, upon an *uncertainty* what the effect of his redemption wou'd be ; for this is plainly to make him act below a wise intelligent agent. This could no ways be *ascertain'd* but by a divine fore-ordination ; for otherwise it must be left to turn upon the corrupt fallacious will of man. If men were left to themselves, such is their *impotency* to what is good

good in their present fallen state, and such a *strong bias* are they under to the world and sin, they wou'd never comply with the terms of salvation; and so must fall short of it after the purchase of it was made. Therefore a special number were chosen, and given to Christ, with respect to whom the father engag'd, that they shou'd be bro't to believe on him, and be a *seed to serve him* in this world, and thro' his merits obtain to everlasting blessedness in the world to come. We are told in the revelation which God hath made to us of the *hidden mystery which God ordain'd before the world unto our glory*, that the success of his redeeming work was ascertain'd to our redeemer, in an inviolable contract, upon his engaging in the great & glorious design. *Isai. 43. 10, 11, 12. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see his seed: the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied: By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death. It was upon the assurance our blessed saviour had given him in this contract, that he spoke those words, John 6. 37. All that the father giveth me, SHALL come to me. Thus I have confirmed*

confirmed the truth we are maintaining, by what I take to be direct scripture proof, and solid argument agreeable to scripture. And if the truth is once well establish'd, there is the less need to regard the objections bro't against it. Yet, I hope, thro' divine assistance, in the next discourse to vindicate this doctrine, in some measure, from the charges bro't against it, as if it argu'd unrighteousness in God, discourag'd persons from using the means of salvation, tended to despair, &c.

In the mean time, let what we have now heard cause us humbly to bow down before the throne of the divine sovereignty, and awfully to adore in the apostles language, Rom. **II.** from the 33d v. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor ? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again ? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things : to whom be glory forever.*
AMEN.

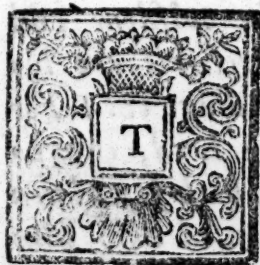


S E R M O N III.



R O M A N S, VIII. 30.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.



TH E S E words have been the foundation of two discourses already, upon this illustrious Doctrine of christianity, That a certain number were selected by God, in his eternal counsel and purpose, from the rest of fallen mankind, to be in time effectually called, sanctified and justified, in order to their being finally bro't to eternal life and glory ; and this out of his meer good pleasure, and for the praise of his glorious grace.

This

This truth has been explained & stated in several propositions. It has also been confirmed & established by positive scripture proof, and by some arguments drawn from the scriptures. That which we are to proceed to at this time is,

III. To attempt to clear this truth of some *misrepresentations* made of it ; and to give an answer to the *objections* commonly bro't against it.

Here I would first of all observe to you, We shou'd not disown or relinquish a doctrine we have been taught, because of some objections rais'd against it, or difficulties attending it. For there is no one truth in all the *bible*, tho' never so plainly laid down, but the corrupt, proud, and aspiring mind of man, has formed some objections against it, and started some difficulties about it. And if we can't quite master all the difficulties, and reconcile every thing that seems contradictory, we must not therefore withhold our assent, if the thing it self is expressly reveal'd in scripture, or necessarily infer'd from it. We are indispensably obliged to believe whatever God has reveal'd, whether it is obvious to our reason, and agrees with our preconceiv'd opinions, or not. If we can but satisfie

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our selves the scripture asserts such a doctrine, the obscurity, difficulty, and harshness, which seem to attend it, must not stumble or offend us. For these are things which are to be receiv'd upon the credit of him that reveals them; and we don't yield that *obedience of faith* which the gospel requires, unless our *understandings* submit to a revealed truth, as readily as our *wills* are to comply with a commanded duty.

It is scripture and not reason, that is the rule of faith: For we are incompetent judges of revealed truths, not only on account of the narrowness of our capacities, but because of that *blindness of mind* which is the consequent of our fallen state.

Nor yet is the unsearchableness of a doctrine reveal'd in scripture, a sufficient reason why we should forbear all *inquiry into it*, or *discourse about it*. What we may not pretend to search out to perfection, or to explain the *modus* of, we may yet know and speak so much of, as to subserve the great ends of religion. And if it is not the object of inquiry, nor a fit subject of discourse, to what end is it reveal'd at all? We are soon lost in the *perfections of the divine nature*, as well as in the *doctrine of the decrees*; yet they must not be let alone

if we would teach people what they are to believe concerning God.

Tho' there are bounds set about the holy mount, and to *break thro' to gaze*, is dangerous, and may be fatal; yet, keeping a proper distance, we may allowably take a view of what is presented before us; and without affecting to be *wise above what is written*, we may safely venture to go into a mysterious subject as far as the scripture leads us, *compareing spiritual things with spiritual*: And by going *into the sanctuary of God*, we may gain some satisfaction about what is otherwise *too painful* for us.

Having said this by way of premise, I come directly to what we propos'd, to vindicate the present truth from some of the misrepresentations made of it, and to answer some objections made against it.

I. To vindicate it from some *misrepresentations*. For a distinction is always to be made between the objections to which a truth may be liable, and the misrepresentations which are ignorantly or maliciously made of it. Some greatly misrepresent this doctrine, and state it in such a manner as we are far from allowing, but utterly disown and reject as well as themselves.

Thus

Thus,

1. Some represent the doctrine of election as God's ordaining to save some particular persons *let them live how they will*.

But no such election as this was ever asserted by us. The scripture knows no such election, and *we* are far from maintaining it. The same decree that designs any persons to salvation, ascertains the means for the obtaining that salvation: These are faith and holiness. God hath chosen us to salvation *thro' sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth*. And the elect of God are *predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son*, which takes in the whole work of sanctification. And therefore we never said, that if a person was elected he might be saved however he ordered his life; for this wou'd be to separate what God has indissolubly connected, and to destroy a part of the decree itself.

2. Another misrepresentation is, when any speak as if the decree of God was *the Reason why men did continue in sin & unbelief*.

Give me leave to reply to this in the words of another. * "Indeed, the imme-

* Dr. Ridgley, by way of reply to Dr. Whitby. See his body of divinity, Vol. 1st. p. 230.

“diate reason why any repent and believe
“to eternal life, is becaule the exceeding
“greatness of his power is exercis’d to-
“wards them, whereby he works repent-
“ance and faith in them; and the reason
“of his exerting this power to work these
“saving graces in them, is because he has
“determined to do it; and so ’tis the
“execution of his purpose. But it does not
“follow from hence, that the reason why
“others do not repent & believe is, be-
“cause they were not ordain’d to eternal
“life. Tis true, their not being ordain’d
“to eternal life, or God’s not having pur-
“posed to save them, is the reason why
“he does not exert that power which is
“necessary to work repentance and faith
“in them; and impenitence and unbelief
“will certainly be the consequent hereof;
“but the immediate spring and cause of
“impenitence and unbelief, is the corrup-
“tion and perverseness of human nature,
“which is chargable on none but man
“himself. We must certainly distinguish
“between impenitence and unbelief their
“being the *consequent* of God’s not work-
“ing repentance and faith, and its being
“the *effect* hereof. If God withholds his
“grace from some to whom he was not
“oblig’d to give it, and they continue in
“sin, this is to be assign’d only to that
“wicked

“ wicked propensity of nature, which inclines us to sin, and not to the divine efficiency ; ” for the decree enforces no man to sin, as we shall have occasion to shew hereafter.

3. Another such gross misrepresentation of this doctrine is, when any speak as if the assertors of it held, that men are damn'd *by vertue of the decree*, without any consideration of their *sin* and *miscarriages*.

But this was never said by the most zealous assertors of election and reprobation. We do indeed affirm that God of his meer sovereignty chose some to everlasting life, and passed by others, without any consideration had to the good works of the former, or the evil deeds of the latter ; but then a distinction is made between bare *non-electing*, and the *decree of condemnation*. *This*, being a thing more positive in the nature of it, must be with a view to sin committed, and from the foresight of it. The objects of the decree of condemnation must be, some way or other, obnoxious to justice, that the righteousness of God may be intirely clear in the judgment of intellectual creatures. For, tho' a favour may be placed on one to whom 'tis not due, while it is withheld from another

another that has no claim to it, without any shadow of injustice; yet, punishment can't righteously be inflicted on one that no way deserves it; and eternal punishment cannot be deserved, if no sin is to be charged.

Among the Calvinistical Divines of the last century, Doctor *Twiss* was one of prime note; and, tho' in the *supra-lapsarian* scheme, he declares himself in the words following; † “ That in no moment
“ of time or reason doth God ordain
“ any man to damnation, before the con-
“ sideration of sin. Every one that is dam-
“ ned is damned for his sin, and that will-
“ fully committed, and contumaciously
“ continued, by them that come to ripe
“ years.

Doctor *Edwards*, another strenuous and learned defender of predestination, says, *
“ It is a true proposition, that God never
“ decreed to make any creature everlast-
“ ingly miserable, who by his voluntary

† In his *riches of God's love*, wrote against Mr. *Hord*, 2d part pag. 50.

* In his *Veritas Redux*, p. 163, 164.

M “ transgression

“ transgression of the divine laws, did not
 “ deserve it. To damn, being an act of
 “ punitive justice, supposes a fault, implies
 “ some demerit. *Tribulation and anguish to*
 “ *every soul of man that worketh evil,* Rom.
 “ 2. 9. *All are under sin,* Rom. 3. 9. *That*
 “ *every mouth may be stopped, and all the world*
 “ *may become guilty before God,* v. 19. There-
 “ fore the penal decree hath respect to this.

And our venerable *Willard* || speaks the
 same language, when he says, “ God in-
 “ tended to damn none but for sin. Dam-
 “ nation is not an act of meer sovereignty,
 “ but of relative justice. God damns none
 “ meerly because he will damn them, but
 “ because they have bro’t it upon them-
 “ selves. As in Jer. 2. 17. *Hast thou not*
 “ *procured this unto thy self, in that thou hast*
 “ *forsaken the Lord thy God?* Sin therefore
 “ is the only cause of men’s destruction.
 “ It is true, there is an infallibility of con-
 “ sequence upon reprobation, that all who
 “ are under that decree will die; but they
 “ do not die because they were reprobated,
 “ but because they sinned. And were it
 “ not so, revenging justice would not be
 “ manifested in this. For, justice appears

|| In his *Expository Lectures*, p. 270.

“ in

" in rewarding men according to their
 " doings, judging by the law which
 " they are under. That justice then may
 " take place, it must appear that the
 " man really deserves the penalty in-
 " flicted on him. Now this desert ariseth
 " from the nature and merit of sin: the
 " man then must be a sinner before he can
 " be justly damned; and if he be so, he
 " then rightly deserves it. So we read,
 " Rom. 6. 23. *The wages of sin is death;*
 " *but the gift of God is eternal life, thro' Jesus*
 " *Christ our Lord.* So that notwithstanding
 " the decree, no one falls under this sen-
 " tence, till by his sin he hath brought it
 " upon himself. No man is doom'd to
 " hell and destruction, because he was re-
 " probated, but because he was a sinner
 " and deserv'd it "

Having so far clear'd the doctrine of
 these misrepresentations that are made of it,

We come,

II. To return some answer to the *ob-*
jections that are commonly offer'd against it.

And

I. Some object against the doctrine
 of election, or God's free choice of some
 of fallen mankind, to make them the sub-
 jects of his grace now, and heirs of glory
 hereafter, while he pass'd by the rest, and
 left them in the ruins of their apostacy; some

object against this, as inconsistent with the *justice and righteousness* of God. Why, say they, shou'd he chuse some and not others, to make them the objects of his redeeming love and grace, when all were alike miserable, and equally undeserving? Does not this make him a respecter of persons? Whenas we are told, Acts 10. 34. *Of a truth God is no respecter of persons*; and he has strictly forbidden this in *earthly judges*.

To this it may be answer'd, That respect of persons which is blam'd amongst men, is when one is prefer'd before another, in a matter of *right*, for some sinister and selfish ends; as when a judge *favours the rich in his cause*; but this is not chargeable where a person is under no obligation by any law or rule, but is at perfect liberty. Thus tho' a man that is a judge, must do alike by all, when he dispenses justice; yet a man is at liberty to take into his house and family whom he pleases, or to bestow his estate on whom he will. If that place in Acts 10. 34. 35. where the apostle Peter says, *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*, is duly consider'd, it will appear that it does not intend but that God does shew favour to some above others;

others; but all that it means is this, that God respects no man's person, either less or more, for his *outward condition & carnal priviledges*.

Now, it is certain that God's election had no regard to any thing in the creature, to any deservings found in the objects of it; for all lay in one corrupt mass when the decree was exercis'd about them, and whatever they have excellent above others is the fruit of their election, and so not the cause of it.

The glorious God was at perfect liberty, being a debtor to none. He is sovereign Lord of his own grace, and may certainly bestow it where he will. None could lay claim to it, and therefore none are wrong'd if it is not bestowed on them; tho' all are highly favour'd who are the partakers of it.

Shall it be reckon'd an act of injustice in God to save some of mankind only, when he might have left ALL to perish, as well as the fallen angels, and not recover'd so much as ONE of our apostate race? We may venture to refer the matter here to the decision of *impartial reason* it self. What! shall not God have power to dispose of his own grace and glory as he pleaseth? When he is a debtor to none, but makes that open challenge, *Who hath first given to him, and it shall*

shall be recompenced to him again? Our saviour hath said eno' to silence this objection, in Mat. 20 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?

2. This truth is further objected against as being inconsistent with the *goodness* and *mercy* of God. They say, *God's tender mercies are over all his works*; that he is represented in scripture as a great lover of mankind, and as having *no pleasure in the death of a sinner*, but a desire that he shou'd live. How then can it be that his saving design is restrain'd to any determinate number, while the rest are left to perish everlastingly? And some are ready to think and say, what is even horrible to repeat, that it taxes a merciful God with the cruelty of making man to damn him.

To this I answer,

However great the goodness and mercy of God are, yet all his creatures in misery do not equally partake in them. This is plain from the distinction that is made between the fallen angels and fallen mankind. The fallen angels are wholly pass'd by, and not one of them saved; and this, to be sure, without any derogation to the mercy of God. Yet there is as much reason to charge God with want of goodness and mercy,

mercy, in leaving all the fallen angels to perish, as in passing by some of fallen mankind. Or will any presume to affirm that God is unmerciful, because he chooses the objects of his mercy, or *has mercy on whom he will have mercy*? The power of God is limited and determin'd in the exercise of it, by his divine wisdom and sovereign pleasure; and why should not his *goodness and mercy* be so too?

Nor does this give occasion for that injurious and blasphemous reflection, that God made some men to DAMN them. For God's purpose to condemn men, does not consider them as *creatures*, but as *sinners*; as we have had occasion to observe already. That God did not create man on purpose that he might sin, is evident from man's primitive state, that of innocence, in which he might have continued. For tho' his creator made him *mutable*, he yet made him *upright* †, without the least tincture of sin in his nature, or any disposition, or inclination to it; but all the powers and faculties of the soul were dispos'd to answer the ends of its creation, and thereby to glorifie God. Now, as God did not

† Eccle. 7. 29.

create man that he might sin, he cannot be said to create him that he might condemn him: "Several other ideas intervene between God's purpose to create " and to condemn.

And tho' the merciful God does not take pleasure in the death of a sinner, as 'tis the misery of his creatures, yet he has, *and from the perfection of his nature cannot but have,* a high satisfaction in the display of his own justice towards some, whose sin has render'd them the proper objects for that terrible attribute to be glorified upon. Besides, these same objections taken from the goodness and mercy of God, lie as much against God's not eventually saving all, as his determination not to save all. None say that all men will be *finally* saved ; for the scripture declares the contrary in many places. Yet 'tis certain, God cou'd save all men if he so pleased. He cou'd change the heart of every sinner in the world, prepare him for salvation, and then bestow it on him. Is it any derogation to his goodness and mercy that he don't do thus? Why then do any charge the opinion of God's determining to save but a part of mankind, with such unmercifulness, when the objection lies full as strong against their own opinion, that God will *actually* save *but a part* of our species?

Not

Nor do we by this opinion make salvation narrower, or more confin'd, than those who oppose it ; but, in fact, make it as extensive in its subjects as they do. As one has well observ'd upon this argument, " The difference between them and us, is " not about the number that are sav'd ; " we both agree in this, that none shall be " sav'd but such as repent and believe, and " obey the gospel, and that all such shall " certainly be saved ; but what we differ " about is, the manner of their obtaining " salvation. We say, they are sav'd by " virtue of the electing love of God ; they " say they are sav'd because they rightly " improve their own free will. We affirm " them to be sav'd in such a way as ascribes " all to the glory of God ; the way of salvation which they hold is such, as leaves " great room for man to glory. Thus far " then our doctrine appears every whit as " merciful to mankind as theirs, inasmuch " as the difference is not about the number of the sav'd, but the way and manner of their coming to this salvation. " Nay, our doctrine appears much *more* " *merciful* than theirs who oppose it. For " ours makes the salvation of millions of " the fallen children of men *absolutely certain*, while theirs makes the salvation of " any man, but *barely possible*. And let any

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" unprejudic'd

“ unprejudic’d person judge, whether a
 “ doctrine that secures the salvation of an
 “ innumerable multitude, is not more
 “ worthy of a compassionate and merciful
 “ God, than a notion that only puts the
 “ salvation of every one upon a bare pos-
 “ sibility, whence it may happen, that
 “ even according to their own tenets, no
 “ one may be sav’d at last.

Nay the author we here refer to † car-
 ries the matter still higher, and with good
 reason asserts, “ That the doctrine of our
 “ *opponents is an unmerciful doctrine*, because
 “ it is so far from ascertaining the salvati-
 “ on of any, that it makes the salvation of
 “ each man a *moral impossibility*. They
 “ suppose the election the scripture speaks
 “ of to be only a conditional one, i. e.
 “ provided men will repent and believe,
 “ and persevere in holiness ; but they will
 “ not allow that God has predestinated any
 “ to faith, repentance, and perseverance to
 “ the end ; but that the performance of
 “ these conditions depends upon their own
 “ will.

“ But if this is the case, the question
 “ which was once put to our Lord, may

† *Sladen.*

“ very properly be ask’d here, *Who then*
 “ *can be saved?* For, if the scripture has
 “ rightly represented men as by nature in
 “ a state of death, to every good work repro-
 “ bate ; *not sufficient as of themselves* to speak
 “ a good word, or think a good tho’t ; how
 “ is it possible they shou’d by their own
 “ innate power ever perform these great
 “ and weighty conditions ? ”

Thus our doctrine appears to be not only consistent with the mercy of God, but to give it a brighter display. And I would only add upon this ; It is the *grace* and *mercy* which I see shining forth in this doctrine, that makes me embrace it, and prize it, and contend for it. And however others may judge, I declare with all seriousness, I wou’d not for ten thousand worlds but my own salvation shou’d stand more secure, than any will or power of my own is able to make it.

To go on.

3. It is objected against the truth we are maintaining, that it is inconsistent with *human liberty*, and tends to establish a *fatal necessity* of things. Some will say, if men are predestinated to faith and holiness, a force is then put upon their inclinations, and a free choice taken away : As on the other hand they say, this brings men under

a necessity of sinning; and why are they to be blam'd or punish'd for what they cannot help? Nay, some will venture so far as to say, that upon this principle God himself must be the author of sin, or the blameable cause of evil.

I answer, To reconcile the divine foreordination with human liberty, is a thing too hard for us; nor may any one pretend to do it. Yet *the matter of fact is certain*, that men do act with liberty and freedom in things that are fore-ordained. And tho' *we* can't reconcile them, there is certainly an agreement between these two. Nor is it more difficult to reconcile this, than some other things which yet are generally own'd. As for instance, the duty and success of *prayer* with the doctrine of God's *unchangeableness*. Such is the perfection of God's nature that he is unchangeable in his mind and purposes. When he is said in scripture to repent or **change** his mind, 'tis only spoken after the manner of men; and can by no means be understood as if he had alter'd his purpose upon any *new prospect*, or was bro't to do otherwise than he before design'd; for this would plainly be to derogate from the perfection of his nature. Yet *prayer* is the appointed means of receiving mercy and blessings from

from God, and he does many things for his people in answer to their prayers, and has *never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain.* Now I say, 'tis no more difficult to reconcile the divine fore-ordination with human liberty, than it is the doctrine of the divine unchangeableness with the efficacy of prayer. And so there is no more reason to reject the doctrine of the *divine decrees*, than there is the doctrine of the *divine unchangableness*, which even reason teaches.

Tho' the elect of God are predestinated to faith and holiness, no violence is offer'd to their wills when they come to believe in Christ, and chuse the way of holiness. Tho' all that the father hath given him, shall come to Christ, yet they come freely, not by a *force upon* their wills, but a *change* in them. Surely God may incline the wills of men, without destroying the nature and freedom of them. So we read, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, Psal. 110. 3. And God tells his people, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.* And the church prays, *Draw me, we will run after thee*, Cant. 1. 4. On the other hand, Tho' the decree of God leaves some unto the sinfulness of their own hearts and lives, out of which he is under

under no obligation to recover them, yet this enforces no man to sin ; but men's sin is always voluntary and chosen. So 'tis said of God's sinful people of old, *Isai. 66.3. They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*

To illustrate and confirm this, let me refer you to the story of *Joseph*, which presents us with a notable draught & scheme of providence. God had a purpose to advance *Joseph* in *Egypt*, and also a design to save his fathers house alive in a time of famine, by sending him there before them to make provision for them ; and as a means to this *Joseph* was sold to the *Ishmaelites*, and by them to an officer in *Pharaoh's* court. But will any one say that his brethren did not act freely in their selling of him, and gratifie their own envy and malice by that wicked deed ?

So our Lord *Jesus Christ* was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, in the divine counsel and purposes ; yet 'tis said of the *Jews* that *for envy they delivered him to Pilate, Mat. 7. 18.* And the apostle *Peter* thus charges them, *Acts 2. 23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. The crime is expressly said to be their own, tho' done in pursuance of the divine determination.*

Nor can the holy God be made the author of sin when he leaves the sinner to his sinfulness: For tho' he permits the sin, he *infuses* no sinfulness into the sinner.

“Will any say, God's denying the revengful person, or the murderer, that grace which would prevent his executing his bloody designs, makes him the author of the murder? Or is his denying to others the necessary supply of their present exigencies, the cause of their making use of unlawful means, by plundering and stealing, to subsist themselves? No, this is only to be assign'd to that wicked propensity of nature, which enclines to sin when occasion is offer'd, & not to the divine efficiency.”

4. It is objected that this doctrine of particular election is inconsistent with such declarations in scripture as those that tell us, God is not willing any shou'd perish, but wou'd *have all men to be saved*; and with such expostulations as God uses with sinners, and lamentations over them, when he says, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* And, *O that thou hadst known in this thy day, the things of thy peace!* And also with such general offers of grace as that, *Whoever will let him take of the water of life freely.*

This

This may seem a plausible objection at the first sound, but upon due consideration will not be found to overthrow what we assert. For as to such *declarations* as this that God wou'd have *all men to be saved*, and therefore *to come to repentance*, they cannot be understood to be any thing more than declarations of mens duty to repent & turn to God that they may be saved, and that the thing in it self consider'd is to be desir'd. They can't possibly mean that he wills the repentance and salvation of all as he does of some; that he wills it as a thing which he will engage his power to accomplish; for then it would immediately come to pass. --- The *expostulations* we meet with in scripture, are forms of speech well suted to awaken men's consideration, bring them to a sense of their duty, and excite them to return to God; and are of this use in the hand of the Spirit, in the effectual calling and conversion of God's elect. --- The *lamentations* that are made over sinners, represent the deplorableness of their condition, and that God has no pleasure in their misery consider'd as his creatures. If they are look'd upon as representing God disappointed in, and griev'd at a thing which he cou'd not help, and has come to pass contrary to his design and expectation, they are certainly strain'd too far:

far. --- And as to the *offers of grace* in the preach'd gospel, *they* are and must be general, for the elect and non-elect live together under the same gospel, and none but God knows who the one and the other are. These free and general offers are for the encouragement of persons awaken'd & in distress, and they prevent the returning sinner from desponding. There is indeed no *deceit* in these offers: *Whoever will may take of the water of life freely* But when any are willing to accept of salvation in the way in which it is offer'd in the gospel, they are made so by God, and 'tis in pursuance of his purpose. We are sure there is no inconsistency between particular election and a general promise, since our saviour asserted the former at the same time that he made the latter, in that famous place, which we have once and again refer'd to, John 6. 37. *All that the father giveth me, shall come to me: And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* From hence I say, it incontestibly appears, That a determinate infallible election is not inconsistent with a free general offer of grace. I shall mention but one objection more, which is,

5thly. That this doctrine *discourages persons* in the use of means, and tends to *despair.*

O

pair. If I am not elected may a person say, to what purpose are all my endeavours for salvation? I can never attain to it by them. And if I am elected, why shou'd I strive and labour, when my salvation is made sure by the immutable decree of God? But, how preposterous is this, when the end & means come under the same decree? As I have had occasion once and again to observe in the process of this subject. God's decree does not at all take off the use of our endeavours, for in the use of the means the very decree it self is to receive its accomplishment. Let me refer you to a scripture story for the illustration & proof of this. When the apostle *Paul* was in imminent danger of shipwrack in his voyage to *Rome*, he encouraged the company by assuring them, there *shou'd not be the loss of any man's life, only of the vessel.* For says he, † *There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, fear not Paul, thou must be brought before Cesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore sirs be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even at it was told me.* Yet when the shipmen were by and by going to flee out of the ship to save

† Acts 27. 23, 24.

themselves by boat, Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, *except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.* Which did not at all weaken the assurance he had just before given them from God, that they shou'd all be saved; for God who had appointed the end, that they shou'd be sav'd, had also appointed the *means*, that they shou'd be saved by the help of those ship-men: so tho' God has ordained the salvation of those that shall be saved, he has ordain'd it in the way of faith and holiness, and a *working out their own salvation with fear & trembling.*

There is no such decree as this, That the elect shall be saved, whether they work about their own salvation, or not. Or, that the elect may continue unconverted, and unconcern'd about eternal blessedness, and yet get safe to heaven at last. If any are ordain'd unto eternal life, it is also ordain'd that they *shall be awakn'd* to a sense of their sin and misery, to earnest prayer to God for recovering & renewing grace; and to a diligent waiting on him in the ways of his appointment, until that he have mercy on them. How then does this doctrine set aside the use of means in order to attain the end?

If any make this a plea for not setting about the work of their salvation, 'tis only

an excuse for sloth, and a meer pretence for their not doing what they have *no mind* to do. For they do not urge and plead the decree in other and lesser matters, as they do in the matters of their salvation. Other things are fore-ordain'd as well as men's salvation; how long they shall live, and whether they shall be rich and prosperous in the world. But who says, I don't know whether God has decreed that I shall live to be old, and therefore I will not take food to preserve my life, nor physick to recover me when I am sick? Or, I don't know whether the decree will allow me to prosper, or not; and therefore I will not work nor trade, nor use any endeavours to get an estate. If any object the decree in the one case, that do not in *the other*, surely they are self-condemned.

And how can this doctrine have a peculiar tendency to drive persons to *despair*, when it ascertains salvation to a *very great number, an innumerable multitude*; and no one knows but *he* is of that number? For it is a very great sin for any one to conclude himself a reprobate. The *greatest* and the *oldest* sinner may not do so. For many of the elect of God have been left unto great sins, and suffer'd to lie long in sin too; but been after all bro't to the *faith of God's elect*, been *washed, sanctified* and

and *justified* in this world, and *glorified* in the next. And if the sinner *is* awakned, and bro't into distress and agony, there is *the more hope* that he will be found of this number, and that a purpose of mercy concerning him is *beginning* to be executed. How in the world does this doctrine tend to despair any more than those places of scripture that speak of the difficulty of salvation, and tells us that few comparatively will be saved? Such passages as that in our saviours sermon on the mount, Mat. 7. 13, 14. *Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

But 'tis easy to load any truth with misrepresentations and abuses if men will set themselves to do so: and such is the perverseness of some, that they will give a wrong turn to a thing that is never so well explain'd and guarded. When we set forth the *mercy* of God, his readiness to pardon, and willingness to receive sinners that return to him by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ; some will abuse it to *presumption*, and from thence encourage themselves to go on in sin because grace abounds, and to defer their repentance to the last of their time.

time. This, so far as we can make a judgment, is a more *common* case than the other; and 'tis full as *dangerous* to the souls of men: Yet none would have us forbear it; and some think it can't be too often treated of, nor eno' enlarg'd upon.

Indeed it is a usual thing for persons under their first awakenings, to have their minds exercis'd about the doctrine of election; but so far as I have been able to observe, it has been a *help*, rather than an hindrance, to them in the work of a thorough conversion, and saving closure with the Lord Jesus Christ; and has been us'd by the Holy Spirit as a means to excite them to give *more diligence* to make their calling sure, and to lay *the stronger hold* on the hope set before them, in a glorious Christ to whom the gospel invites them to flee for refuge.

And it seems to me that upon a fair and just representation of the state of the case, it will appear to every considerate and unprejudic'd person, that a minister in treating with troubled awakned consciences, can do it with much greater advantage upon the foot of *particular election*, and those other doctrines of grace that are connected with it, than on the foot of *universal redemption*,

demption, and the opinions that follow that. For, suppose a person in deep concern about his everlasting salvation, should come to a minister for his help and direction, and the minister should tell him; God was a kind and merciful being, who delighted in the happiness of his creatures, and made none of them miserable that did not make themselves so; and Christ was the saviour of the world, who died for all men, and consequently for him as much as for any one; and if he did but repent of his sins, and trust in the merits of Christ, and lead a good life, and continue to do so to the end, he need nor fear, for the gospel promis'd salvation to him. Might he not reply? And if his concern was deep and thorough, he would reply to this effect; Tho' God is a kind and merciful being, 'tis as true that he is so holy as to hate sin, and so just as to punish the sinner; and how much soever he *delights in the happiness of his creatures*, we know it will be the portion of a great many of them to be everlastingly miserable: True, *he makes none of them miserable that don't make themselves so*; but this is my unhappy case: I see I am a sinner, tho' I was not so sensible of it as I am now; I have revolted from him and rebelled against him; and I fear he will make me as miserable, as I have made my self sinful. And if Christ is
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the saviour of all men, all men will not be actually and finally saved by him ; this general redemption leaves the salvation of all men at an uncertainty. If I could know he died for *me* in particular, I should think my salvation secur'd ; but I have no reason to think he died for me any more than for those who will perish forever. As to that *faith, repentance and obedience*, which the gospel makes the conditions of an interest in salvation by Jesus Christ, whatever undue opinion I have had of my own strength before, I am now convinc'd these are things out of my power, and must be wro't in me by a divine energy. I find my heart to be hard and unbelieving, averse to the way of holiness, and only bent to sin. And there are so many evil inclinations to be denied, temptations to be resisted, and enemies to be overcome, that I fear I shall not hold out in the way to heaven ; and without I endure to the end, I can't expect to be saved. Others have turn'd back, after they have seem'd to set out well ; and I have no better security than they had. My salvation, for any thing I can see, is very uncertain ; yea, very unlikely, and next to impossible, if I am left so much to my self in it.

On the other hand ; When a minister tells an inquiring, solicitous, anxious soul, not only that the death of Christ is of value sufficient to purchase salvation for all men, if God had been pleas'd to design the salvation of all ; but that he died to render the salvation of a very great number of them infallibly certain ; and therefore has purchas'd for every one of these that faith & repentance which the gospel makes necessary to salvation, which are most commonly wro't in them by the Holy Spirit in the use of the appointed means ; and that their final perseverance in grace, and compleat victory over sin, the world, and satan, are secured in a well order'd covenant, of which the Lord Jesus Christ himself is the head and surety : and if when the inquiring person expresses a doubt & fear that he is not one of the happy number, & seems ready to be discourag'd on this account, the minister further lets him know, there is no real ground for any such fear, inasmuch as none can tell who are included in this number, and who are not ; and many are included in it who have greatly fear'd the contrary ; that the present concern of mind he is under renders it very hopeful that he will be found of this number at last, inasmuch as this is the way of the Spirit with the elect of God, when he is about

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effectually

effectually to call them ; first to awaken them out of their former ease and security, to convince and humble them, and so drive them to Christ : That if he goes to Christ for life upon the general call of the gospel, his election of God is put out of question ; and then he need not be discouraged on account either of his unworthyness or inability ; for the promises of effectual and persevering grace made to Christ in behalf of the elect are absolute, and he may plead them, and take the comfort of them, and rest assured that as Christ will cast out none that come to him, so it is not *the will of his father in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish* † ; and therefore he has undertaken to perfect that which does concern them, to compleat the good work begun in them, to protect and guide them thro' this evil world, and carry them safely to the kingdom prepared for them. — When, I say, a minister applies himself in this manner, upon these principles, to an awakened distressed soul, does it not carry greater encouragement, & stronger consolation in it, than the other, which only makes the salvation of all men possible, but secures salvation to none of them ;

† Mat. 18. 14.

and leaves them so much to themselves in a difficult and hazardous work, to which they know & find they are sadly unequal?

Thus an answer has been given to some of the more common objections bro't against this truth. But I have not yet gone thro' all that I propos'd ; tho' I have endeavour'd to be as comprehensive as I could. Another discourse must be allow'd me: In which I shall endeavour to improve the subject to the ends of practical religion; and persons may be directed how to make their election sure ; for a person will never be thro'ly reconcil'd to this doctrine, till he has a hope of his own interest in it. *Consider of what has been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things ;* establishment in this, and every other gospel truth. *This also we wish, brethren, even your growing up towards perfection, in knowledge and faith, together with holiness and comfort.* We wou'd not have you always as *babes* to be fed with milk, but as *men in Christ* to be able to receive and digest these truths which the apostle calls *strong meat*. 'Tis a mean and a low thing for a christian to be content to know nothing but what is necessary to salvation. There are many truths reveal'd in the gospel, which we can't say are absolutely necessary

cessary to salvation, which yet 'tis a shame for christians not to have the knowledge of, because they redound to the honour of God, and have an influence into some parts at least of practical religion. And if these are among *the deep things of God*, let it not discourage you from a humble cautious search into them by the light of scripture, and with prayer to the spirit of truth, to lead you into all truth.

I conclude now with the apostles prayer for the *Philippians*, 1 chap. 9, 10, 11. v. *This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment ; that ye may approve things that are excellent ; (or, as the margin reads it, try things that differ ;) that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God. AMEN.*

S E R.



S E R M O N, IV.



R O M A N S, VIII. 30.

Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : and whom he called, them he also justified : and whom he justified, them he also glorified.



WE have had three discourses from these words concerning the doctrine of *predestination unto life*. The truth has been explain'd & stated in several propositions. It has been confirm'd and establish'd by plain scripture proof, and solid argument agreeable to scripture. Some misrepresentations made of it have been rectified ; and several objections obviated.

ated. I hope now to finish the subject as God shall vouchsafe to help. And the next thing we are to proceed to according to the method we at first propos'd is,

IV. To set before you some of the *absurd consequences* which follow upon the denial of this doctrine, and the *difficulties* of which the contrary scheme labours, and with which they are embarras'd who are on the other side of the question. This, I apprehend, will cast some more light into the subject, and further confirm the truth we are maintaining ; and it may help to undeceive some who have been ready to think all the difficulty lies on our part, and there is little or nothing for our opponents to reconcile, or to clear away, before this notion can be embrac'd.

And

I. If such an election as we have been speaking of is not granted, it follows, That *the will of God*, even in an affair wherein his own glory is so greatly concern'd as the salvation of men, is *dependent on the will of the creature*.

I think the more general scheme of those who cannot subscribe to the doctrine of election is, That God has not infallibly will'd the salvation of any particular persons,

sions, but conditionally will'd the salvation of all men ; that is, provided they will repent, and believe : but has not determin'd to give this repentance and faith to any in particular ; at least not till he sees how they improve the common grace and advantages they are under. This is evidently to make the will of God in this matter, subject to, and directed by the will of man, which is very dishonourable to him. This notion represents God, as saying, " I will that all men should be saved ; nevertheless it must finally be, not as I will, but as they will. " This is in effect to take away the will of God ; for, to be sure he can have no absolute will of his own, whose will must be directed by the will of another, and is liable to be frustrated by it.

2. Without such an election as we are maintaining, God *might* be wholly disappointed in his saving design respecting the children of men, and the precious blood of Christ *might* have been shed in vain. The one could not be secur'd, nor the other prevented, without an election of individuals, to whom the redemption purchas'd by Christ shou'd be infallibly applied.

They will not get clear of this absurd consequence, by having recourse to the fore-knowledge

fore-knowledge of God, and saying, he certainly fore-knew that some, and a great number wou'd repent and believe, and so was assur'd he shou'd not be disappointed in his design, and that his son would not die in vain ; because, as we have shown already, the fore-knowledge of God necessarily infers his fore-ordination : for it is certain, that when all things *future* were no where but in the mind of God, in the days of eternity, he cou'd know nothing of them but what was his determinate will and counsel concerning them.

Or if they will say, that to prevent this disappointment, God will so order it that some shall be inclin'd and dispos'd to comply with the terms of salvation ; this is in effect to give up the point, and grant what we assert : for this will be to allow *discriminating grace exercis'd in time*, which can't well be defended without allowing a *discrimination in God's purpose* relating thereto ; because they must otherwise suppose there are new determinations in the divine will, which wou'd be to argue him imperfect in wisdom and knowledge.

3. Another of the gross absurdities which I apprehend follows upon the denial of this doctrine is, That man's salvation is
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left at the same uncertainty under the *new covenant*, that it was in under the *first*; nay, that the state of mankind *now*, is much more difficult and dangerous than it was then.

Man's happiness, or misery, turned upon the exercise of his own free will under the first covenant; and so it does still if the salvation of a number is not secur'd by electing love and grace. And can we suppose it consistent with the love and kindness of God, to leave salvation again to depend upon the will of man, which had ruin'd him once before? If free-will ruin'd man in his *first state*, while he was *upright*; is it not much more likely to ruin him in his *worst state*, now that he is *fallen and corrupt*? How can we imagine the wise God to expect his design of man's salvation shou'd be answer'd in the same way, when it was rendered much more unlikely; I may say impossible now, tho' it was not so before? Agreeably we read, Job 15. 15. *Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints.* He does not trust the concerns of his glory in their salvation, in their own hands; for he well knew his saving design wou'd then never take effect. And therefore their salvation is infallibly secur'd by the new covenant, which is call'd a *better covenant*, establish'd upon better

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promises.

promises ; promises of reconciling, renewing and persevering grace, positive and absolute, Heb. 8. 6. A transcript of which covenant follows, in the 10, 11, & 12. v. and it runs in the most absolute unconditional strain that can be; *This is the covenant that I will make with them, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts ; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

Once more,

4^{thly}, Another of the consequences, which, as I conceive, follows upon the denial of this doctrine is, That the salvation of every particular man does originate with himself ; or at least is to be divided between God and the creature.

They that are in the other way of thinking, suppose that by the death of Christ mankind are put into a salvable state ; but that the success as to particular persons depends upon their acceptance of the offered salvation, and compliance with the terms of it ; which acceptance and compliance (according

(according to them) are not the result and fruit of God's purpose of grace, but rather of mens own reason and consideration, will and choice excited by those rational arguments that have been set before them, and that moral suasion which has been used with them. Some of these will indeed speak of the *grace of God*, and acknowledge we can do nothing without *that* ; but all they seem to mean is a *common general grace* which goes along with the gospel, and one may improve to equal advantage as another. --- And if it be thus, the sinner that is sav'd, is furnish'd with an easy answer to that question, 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another ?* The happy difference instead of being ascrib'd to the free and powerful grace of God, must upon this principle, be ascrib'd to the man himself, his own reason and choice, good conduct and endeavours. There is no *medium* here ; for according to the apostles arguing, every mans salvation takes rise from the free grace of God in election, or from his own works. Rom. 11. 5, 6. *Even so at this time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, (such as I mention'd just now, vi z. electing grace ; if by grace, I say) then it is no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is*

no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work. But that doctrine which gives the creature so much room to boast, and put in for so great a share in the honour of his own salvation, cannot be of God ; for he will not have any thing of his *glory given to another.* And nothing can be more contrary to the design of the gospel, which is to stain the pride of all flesh, to take away all occasions of glorying from the creature, and to secure to divine grace its full honours. The prophet shews the glory and tendency of the gospel state, when he says, as in Isa. 2. 17. *The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*

The exaltation of FREE GRACE is evidently what the glorious God aims at in the contrivance of fallen man's redemption. To this the whole frame is admirably fitted, from the first corner stone, to the bringing forth the top stone thereof. 1 Cor. 1. 29, 30, 31. *That no flesh shou'd glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption : That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* Eph. 2. 7, 8, 9. *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us,*
through

through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved, through faith ; and that not of your selves : it is the gift of God : Not of works, least any man should boast.

And so we proceed to the

V. general head, which is, To shew the *importance* of this doctrine, and the place it holds in the scheme of christianity ; by which you will be help'd to judge whether it is a doctrine that had better be suppress'd than publish'd in the church. But here I must be content with hinting at things, without enlargement, or I shall much exceed my limits.

To be sure ; The *gospel* can't be fully preach'd if this article is dropt ; for it is evidently a great part of the subject matter of the sacred pages.

We can't rightly conceive of the *attributes* of God, if we are unacquainted with this doctrine. --- It is in this decree of election, that several of the glories and excellencies of the divine nature, appear in their brightest and strongest light. As to the *sovereignty* of the great God, his absolute supremacy over all creatures, and right to dispose of them for his own glory ; *this* is left out of the notion men frame of God, and he quite loses the glory of this high

high prerogative, when this truth is not understood and acknowledg'd ---. And as to the divine *goodness, mercy and grace*, nothing displays these so much, as the everlasting purpose of God to deliver so many of the children of *Adam*, from the misery they had involv'd themselves in, and the punishment they had deserv'd. To deliver some, and not all, renders the divine goodness towards the subjects of this deliverance, more perspicuous and glorious. The salvation of men wou'd not so fully appear to be from *free mercy and grace*, if no difference was made between persons. To this purpose the apostle speaks, Rom. 11. 23. *That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, whom he had afore prepared unto glory:* His making choice of *some*, while he passes by others, commends his favour to *them*, renders it more glorious in their eyes, constrains their admiration now, and will raise their highest notes of praise hereafter. The eternal melody they will make, is that, Rev. 5. 9. *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeem'd us to God by thy blood OUT OF every tongue, and kindred, and nation.*

Many of the peculiar, high and noble, instructive and comfortable *doctrines* of the
gospel

gospel are concern'd in this, and connected with it. What will become of that *covenant of redemption* between the father and the son from the days of eternity, of which we read in the 89th *Psalms*; 53d ch. of *Isaiah*; 10th and 17th ch. of *John*, and other places; if a distinguish'd number were not given to Christ, as his charge, and as his reward? --- The *satisfaction of Christ* is rendred a very loose uncertain and unsafe thing, if there are not a certain number for whom it was made and accepted; and the value of it is lessen'd exceedingly, if it did not purchase faith, repentance, and holiness, for them on whom they are bestowed. ----- That *free will* which stands in competition with, and opposition to the grace of God in our salvation, can never without this be thrown to the ground as it ought to be. --- The doctrine of *efficacious grace* which does so much honour to the Holy Spirit; and the doctrine of the *saints perseverance in grace*, which is so comfortable to them; depend very much on this doctrine of *election*.--- This is the *foundation* of all those *great and precious promises* contain'd in the new covenant; the *ground-work* of our redemption; the *rise and spring* of all those spiritual blessings we are made the partakers of, to which the saints shou'd look back in their joyful praises, and without

without the consideration of which, they cannot comprehend what is the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God in Christ. It is therefore taken into that thanksgiving of the apostle, Eph. 1. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, ACCORDING AS HE HAS CHOSEN US IN HIM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*

In a word ; As this doctrine is a spring of *consolation* to believers, so 'tis a most powerful argument to holiness & *obedience* ; and this not only that they mayn't be without the tokens of election, but out of gratitude, and by way of acknowledgment to God for his distinguishing and eternal love to them. Accordingly it is matter of observation, that those who have embrac'd this doctrine, have been among the most exemplary, cautious, diligent and fruitful christians. But this has almost enter'd me into the

With and last thing propos'd, namely, The *improvement* of the subject to the ends of serious religion, and practical godliness. For had I taken it to be only an abstruse speculation, and not a doctrine according to godliness, I had spar'd my self the pains of these discourses.

The

The subject may be improv'd,

1. To let us into the meaning of several of the acts of God's *providence*.

Thus we are from hence furnish'd with a reason, why *the human race was not cast off by God, upon the apostacy*, as were the angels that sinned. It was because there was an election of grace amongst them. This gave birth to the early promise of the seed of the woman to break the serpents head. To this it was owing that there was an arrest of judgment, after the sentence was pronounc'd on our apostate parents; and that mankind was allow'd to partake so largely of the divine goodness.

We also learn from hence the reason of God's patience with the *present world*, that is grown so sinful. It is because of a distinguish'd remnant of mankind that are in it now, and are to be born into it hereafter. So those words are to be expounded, Isa. 65. 8, 9. *Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants sake, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell*

dwell there. So our saviour said that *for the elects sake*, the days of the destruction of the *Jews* shou'd be shortned, and a stop put to that desolation, which otherwise wou'd have proceeded to that degree, that no flesh shou'd be saved, *Mat 24. 22.* When the elect of God are all born into the world, and ripened for heaven, then judgment will commence, the patience of God with our sinful species will be at an end, and that destruction by fire unto which the world is reserv'd will come on.

Again,

Here's a reason of the divine forbearance and long-suffering towards *particular sinners*. If they are not among the elect themselves, who are to be effectually called in due time, it may be some of the elect are to *spring from them*, and for this reason they are spar'd notwithstanding all their provocations. If God should make quick work, and *early destroy* all the wicked of the earth, whence shou'd his elect arise in the world? *Jeroboam* and *Ahaz* were not cut off in their first transgressions, because good *Abijah* and *Hezekiah* were to spring from them. Many that will heartily embrace Christ, must rise from such as reject him. The Lord suffers many a wicked person to stand for a time under his patience, says holy Mr. *Flavel*, because children are to spring from them,
who

who will obey and embrace that Christ whom their wicked parents rejected." The world then has no need to murmur at, and quarrel with this doctrine of election as they do. It is well for the rest of the world that there is an election of grace out of it. Others fare the better for this: Since for the sake of these the wicked world is spared from age to age, and the execution of divine justice towards particular sinners delayed.

2. This doctrine affords much *comfort* and *encouragement* to serious and thoughtful minds, in times of great *defection* and *corruption*.

When there is a wide spread of error, and a mighty torrent of profaneness; when evil men and seducers wax worse & worse, as they will do in the last days; when many are turned from the faith, and numbers loose their first love; let the pious and faithful in Christ Jesus remember for their encouragement, it is impossible to deceive the elect, in things that are essential to salvation; and *the foundation of God stands sure; having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.* And it may be the number of these is much larger than we are sometimes ready to fear. As in *Elijah's* time, when the apostacy from the true worship

and service of God was so general, that the good prophet tho't there was no one beside himself who preserv'd his integrity, he was told for his comfort, there were thousands more. The apostle mentions this instance, and applies it to the times of the preaching of the gospel, Rom. 11. 2, 3, 4, 5. *God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to my self seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

3. Since some of the children of men are cholen unto salvation, predestinated unto life, let us inquire, Whether we have, at present, any good ground to hope that we are of the distinguish'd number.

This may be known, or the apostle would not have exhorted us to *give diligence to make our election sure*; as he does in 2 Pet. 1. 10. And he writes to the *Thessalonians*, as if their election, (or the election of the body of that church) was
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no longer a matter of doubt, but of certainty. The 1st ep. 1 ch. 4. v. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*

We need not here say in our hearts, *Who shall ascend into heaven, to see whether my name is written there? Who will bring the book of life down to me, to see whether I am enroll'd in it, or not?* The proof of this matter is near us, even in the book of scripture which we have in our hands.

The apostle in the place just mentioned, tells the *Thessalonians* what was the proof of their election. *Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God : For our gospel came to you, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.* Inquire then, what effect the word of the gospel has had upon you. Has it come to you *with power*? Has it had a convincing, enlightning, humbling, converting efficacy upon you? Have you found it as a *fire*, and as a *hammer*, that *breaketh the rock in pieces*? -- Has it come to you in the *Holy Ghost*? accompanied with such an energy of the spirit, as to kill sin in you, and make you alive to God? for *the letter killeth, but it is the spirit giveth life.* -- Has it come to you with *much assurance*? Are you so convinc'd of the truth of the gospel, as to adhere to the profession of it
against

against all the disputings of men, and discouragements of the world ; and so as to venture your souls, your everlasting concerns upon the verity of it ? Do you esteem the records of the gospel to be *faithful sayings*, and *worthy of all acceptation* ; and make the *bible* the rule of your life, the foundation of your hope, and spring of your consolation ? This success of the gospel upon you will be a proof of your election, as it was of the election of the believing obedient *Thessalonians*.

The apostle *Peter* also shews us in what way and order to make our election sure. As in the place we have just mentioned, (2 Pet. 1. 10.) *Give diligence, brethren, to make your calling and election sure ; your election by your calling : For, whom he predestinated, them he also called.* If then God has added the internal to the external call of the gospel : If you are bro't out of those sinful ways you once walk'd in, to walk in *the way of good men*, the way of holiness and obedience ; If you are taken off from the world, and no longer seek it as your blessedness, but have chosen God for your portion & happiness ; if heaven is your end, and you are resolv'd to take up with nothing short of it, and make use of Christ as the way to it ; you may then be assur'd, you shall see *the good of his chosen, and rejoice with the gladness of his nation, and glory with his inheritance.*

Again,

Again,

We are told, Acts 13. 48. *As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.* Examine then, whether *the faith of God's elect* is wro't in you. Do you believe the record God has given of his son? God's way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, reveal'd and propos'd in the gospel, do you receive it, approve of, and rest in it; and renouncing all other hopes and expectations, repose your whole confidence therein? And is Christ precious to you, as he is to *them that believe*? You may know then you were ordain'd to eternal life before the foundation of the world.

To proceed,

Your *love to God*, as well as your faith in Christ, evidences your election: for so we read, 1 John 4. 19. *We love him, because he first loved us.* Let it then be inquir'd, Do I love the Lord our God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength? Do I make choice of him before all other things, and delight in him supremely? Is this the inward language of my soul, *Thou art my portion, O Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is nothing on earth I desire besides thee.* You may then hear him saying to you, *Yea I have loved you with an everlasting love.*

But

But as love can't be sincere unless it is obediential, so our *new obedience* is another proof and evidence of our election. The apostle has told us, Eph. i. 3. *He hath chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we shou'd be holy, and without blame before him in love.* We must inquire then, if we wou'd know our election, Whether there is a separation wro't between us and our sins and lusts? Whether we walk *not after the flesh, but after the spirit*? Whether indwelling sin is a burthen and grief to us, and we are labouring in the mortification of it? Whether we are in the use of all proper and appointed means, *Cleansing our selves from all filthyness of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God?* Do we desire nothing more than holiness, a conformity to the image of Christ? And do we lament nothing more than our want of holiness, or of conformity to the image of his son? This is *a token of salvation.* You may rest satisfied from hence, that God *has not appointed you to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. The next use must be by way of counsel, to such as have no ground *at present* to conclude themselves of this number; who have no reason *as yet* to think themselves effectually called and converted; to have that faith, and love, and holiness, which

which are the marks of God's elect. To such I wou'd address a few words of direction ; and O that they might be regarded and put in practice !

1. Don't *murmur* at God's decree of election ; for this is to rebell against God, and will highly displease him. And besides, you have no reason to do so ; for this is not the *cause* of your continuing in sin and impenitence, as was shown when we answer'd the objections against this doctrine ; but it must be assign'd to the corruption and wickedness of your nature, from which indeed you can't be deliver'd but by the almighty grace of God. Labour to be reconcil'd to God's method of saving sinners, tho' it be not such as human reason might have carv'd out. His method of salvation is certainly the wisest and the best : For as the heavens are *high above the earth* ; so are *his tho'ts above our tho'ts, and his ways above our ways*, Isa. 55. 8.

2. Beware of drawing up any *dark conclusions* concerning your self, as if the decree of God was against you. Satan may tempt you to this ; but *you are not ignorant of his devices*. Remember, tho' there are many signs of election, there are no certain tokens of reprobation, except the sin

the Holy Ghost. Supposing the doctrine of election, yet, as God has a reconciling work on foot in this world, you are as likely to have an interest in it as another. It is certain God has a purpose of mercy for a great many. Some in all ages shall find mercy. And there is nothing to exclude *thee*, in thy country, sex, age, or any of thy outward circumstances; no, nor yet in the greatness of thy sins, or long continuance in them. For it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of them.* Wherefore your way is,

2. To apply for mercy, and hope for it, upon the invitations and encouragements of the gospel. Even a *peradventure* is look'd upon to be encouragement eno' to try in other cases of hazard and distress; and why not in this? Remember the instance of *Benhadad's* servants, and take direction from it, 1 Kings 20. 31, 32. *And his servants said unto him, Behold now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel, are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; peradventure he will save thy life.* So they girded sackcloth on their loins, put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Benhadad saith,

said, I pray thee, let me live. And the submission was not only accepted, and his life spared, but he was treated with marks of friendship and respect

Go and do thus, O sinner : submit to mercy, without indenting and making terms with God. You have much greater encouragement to submit to the *God of Heaven*, than they had to the present *king of Israel*. There was but a bare peradventure in that case. They had heard only in the general that the kings of *Israel* were merciful kings; but whether this king *Abab* was of such a disposition, they knew not; and yet they adventur'd upon it to seek to him But thou hast heard that the king of heaven is a merciful king. He has proclaim'd his name, *The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.* He has actually pardon'd thousands and millions in the like condition; and his reconciling work is not yet at an end. A gracious mediator is provided to introduce you into his presence, and to make intercession for you : If you will not then apply and seek, surely you deserve to perish.

O man, woman, whoever thou art, I must tell you before I leave you, Your election of God need not lie long at such uncertainty with you. Yea, I may venture to

tell you, it may possibly be bro't to a happy conclusion at this very time, that you are of this number. I must repeat those words of our saviour, John 6. 37. *All that the father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* Coming to Christ then is the fruit and evidence of election; and so this important matter may be decided by it. Now the call of Christ to you in the gospel this day is; *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* Come to me, O sinner, for such blessings as I have to bestow on the people of God. Put your soul over into my hands, to be wash'd in my blood, justified by my righteousness, sanctified by my spirit, and preserv'd by my power. Let me henceforth be your prophet to teach and enlighten you, your priest to atone and interceed for you, and your king to rule you for my self ---. If any soul of you do now comply with this call: If you can make this answer, *Lord, I am willing to come to thee, for these ends and purposes. Thou hast made me willing. I consent to be thine now if I never did before, and take thee for my saviour, leader, owner, and ruler for ever ---* The matter is then at this time bro't to an issue. The secret decree of election

election *this day opens* upon you. You may now know you were first given to Christ by the father, or you wou'd never have been inclined and enabled thus to come to him ; and henceforth you may read your *name written in the lamb's book of life.*

5. The last use may be to put those who have any good ground to hope that they are of this number, upon some special duties agreeable to their state and privileges.

1. You shou'd thankfully acknowledge and adore the riches of distinguishing grace, eminently illustrated in your election. The disciple was so affected with the distinguishing favour of heaven, to himself and others, as in a rapture to cry out, John 14. 22. *Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not unto the world !* A believer may say, How is it Lord, that thou shou'd chuse me ! That thou shou'd set thine everlasting love upon me, when so many others, fallen men as well as fallen angels, are pass'd by ! And so many of the learned, rich, and honourable of the world ! And this before I had any thing good in me ; upon no fore-seen merit ; nay, notwithstanding thou sawest how I shou'd dishonour and provoke thee by my sins ! O glorious, sovereign, & distinguishing grace!

I can never eno' admire it ! Eternity will not be too long to praise thee for it ! ----- Peculiar favour calls for special thankfulness. *I thank thee, O father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes : Even so, father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight !* Here, here, says one, are " thanksgivings of the most elevated strain " in christianity. They are words, to lift " up the horn. They sound high in our " devotions. A thankful Christian raises his thanksgivings to the highest " notes, when he comes hereabouts. 'Tis " a melody peculiarly acceptable to heaven ; 'tis the very beginning of heaven. "

2. Love him who has first loved you, in such a manner as may something answer his love to you. He lov'd you before you had a being ; and you should love him while you have any being. He lov'd you above many others ; & you must love him above all creatures, more than houses and lands, brother or sister, father or mother, husband, wife, or children ; or you are not worthy of him, or of that love which he has plac'd upon you.

3. Always remember you are under the biggest obligations to holiness and obedience. For ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye shou'd
shew

shew forth the praises of him, who has called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light. † Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one other, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. * Do nothing to disgrace this holy doctrine. Be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. † Let your watchful, exemplary, fruitful conversation, serve to confute them who say this doctrine tends to licentiousness. Duty, gratitude and interest, all conspire to make you abound in the work of the Lord. You are favour'd above others, and therefore shou'd often think on that question which our Lord once put, Mat. 5. 47. *What do you more than others?*

4. *Cheerfully acquiesce in all the dealings of God with you.* For all his providences are the effect of his purposes, and are best fitted to carry on his design of grace concerning you. *We know*, says the apostle, in the verse before our text, *That all things*

† 1 Pet. 2. 9. * Col. 3. 12, 13. || Phil. 2. 15.
shall

shall work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. You are predestinated, says our text, to be conformed to the image of his son ; and your very afflictions and sorrows are appointed to bring you to this conformity to Christ, who was himself a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. You may rest satisfied, that nothing you meet with can hinder the purpose of God concerning you from taking effect, but rather all things shall be subservient thereunto. Therefore you may not only take the comfort of your mercies, but get above your afflictions, and rejoice in tribulation. Read the believers security and triumph, in the verses following our text ; *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth : Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? (As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter)* Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am perswaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

nor

nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Forget not to pray for all that belong to the election of grace. For those that are not yet gather'd. Other sheep Christ has, which are not yet bro't into the fold; pray that these may hear his voice, and follow him. Some of the elect are not only *uncalled*, but *unborn*: It is therefore a suitable petition in the publick liturgy of the church of England, which we can join in, *That it may please God of his gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of his elect* "†

And pray for them that are gather'd and added to the church, *That they may be holy in all manner of conversation, as he who has called them is holy: May walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; and be pressing on towards perfection: May be guarded and safely carried thro' this evil world, till they joyfully enter upon the rewards of the next. Psal. 28. 9. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance, feed them also, and lift them up forever.*

Once more,

† See the *Burial Office* in the *Common Prayer Book*.

6. Let the *second coming and appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*, be the matter of your earnest prayer, and object of your joyful hope and expectation. For in this day the Lord will *make up his jewels*. Now Christ will raise up all that were given him by the father, without letting any be lost or wanting; saying to his father, *Here I am, and the children which thou hast given me*. I present them all together, *a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*. This will be done *with exceeding joy*, both on the part of the Father who chose them, the Son who redeem'd them, the Holy Spirit who sanctified them, ministers who were instrumental to gather them in, and on the part of the chosen and redeemed themselves.

We have a pleasant vision of Christ at the head of a happy remnant, preserv'd from the corruptions and carried thro' the persecutions of *antichrist*: Read it; and then think what a glorious sight it will be to see him at the head of the whole church of the elect in the great day. Rev. 14. 1, to 5. *And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Fathers name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the*

the voice of a great thunder : and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps : And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders : and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women ; for they are virgins : these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth : these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile : for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Thus I have been carried thro' what I propos'd on this subject. Many things which belong to it have been omitted ; and others but touch'd, which I could with pleasure have enlarg'd upon : but I have studied brevity.

And now, I desire to bow the knee in thanksgiving to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given me this opportunity to bear a small testimony to these important truths. I trust I have had a single aim at his glory in these discourses ; and so I look to Him, in his son Jesus, for his gracious acceptance of what has been his own, and his merciful forgiveness of what

what has been (otherwise : and on him I humbly depend to succeed them.

I close all with the apostles prayer and benediction, in 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17. Now our LORD JESUS CHRIST himself, and GOD even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.



THE END.

31 DE63



CORRECTIONS.

P Age 4. line 10. in the margin, *r. cognoscuntur.*
 p. 11. l. 6. *r. reverent* p. 41. l. 9. *r. apostle-*
ship. p. 44. l. 24. *r. acquiesces.* p. 45. l. 19. *r.*
Hymeneus. p. 72. l. 11. *dele to.* p. 88. l. 8. *r. crea-*
ture. p. 101. l. 10. *r. tell.* p. 102. l. 5. *from the*
bottom, r. consciences. p. 119. l. 2. *from the bottom*
r. partakers. p. 125. l. 8. *dele, or not.*

